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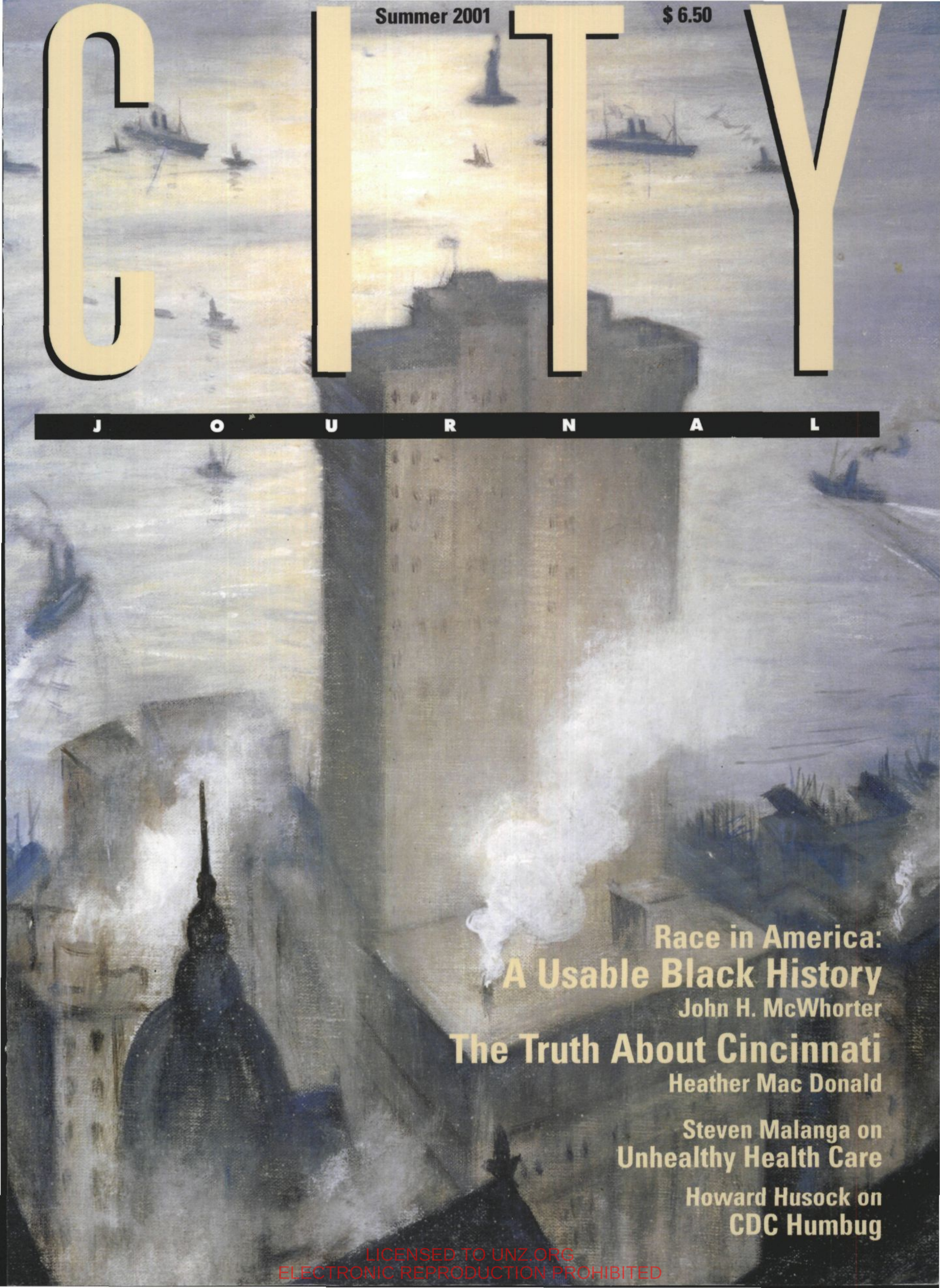

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The Truth About Cincinnati

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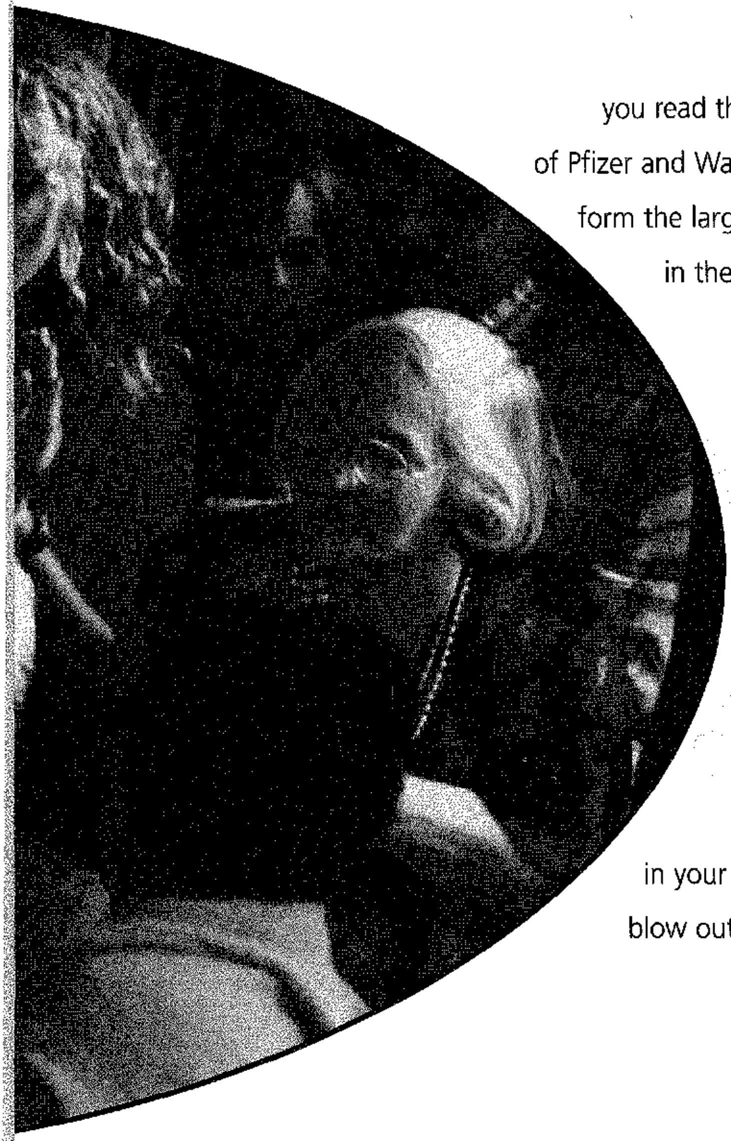

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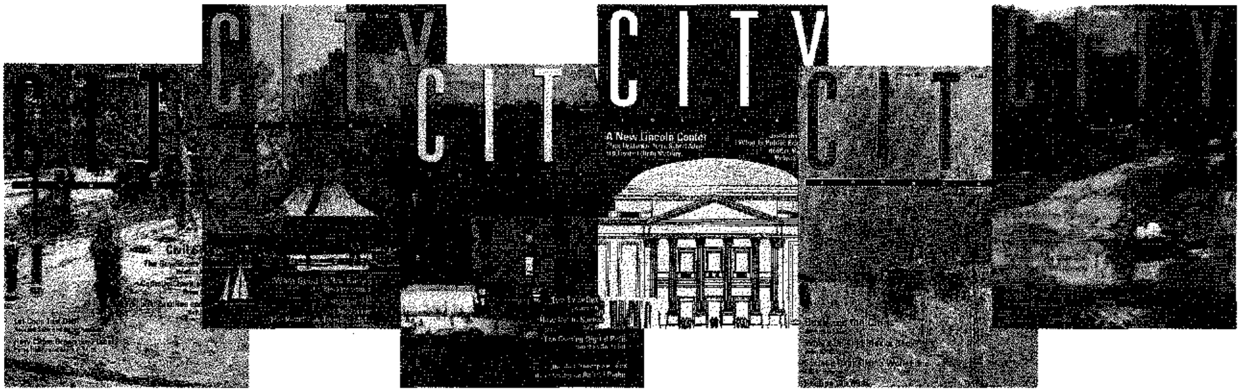

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In Prospect

Can't they just *see*?" That's the question that broods over our two cover stories, each dealing with a different aspect of race in America. Both stories arrive at startlingly similar conclusions, for both writers, setting out from different places and taking separate paths, have faithfully followed the evidence to some profound truths.

Can't black Americans just *see*, asks John H. McWhorter in "Toward a Usable Black History" (page 14), that, after centuries of travail on this continent, they are at last fully American, able to claim their place as equal citizens in the freest civilization in history, pulsating with opportunity for anyone who seeks it? Trouble is, a habit of fixating on the horrors of the past—slavery, racism, humiliation—inhibits black Americans from appreciating that for 150 years their ancestors also created vital communities in which they achieved fulfilling lives worthy of respect, for all the obstacles in their way.

In today's America, this is an option available to all. But because of their focus on the painful rather than the hopeful past, black Americans too readily look back in admiration to those who rebelled and protested, who railed against victimization rather than showed the way forward past the pain. Much better, says McWhorter, to teach black kids a *usable* history that, without minimizing the injustice, nevertheless tells the story of past black accomplishment in America, as a way of encouraging ever greater accomplishment in the future.

Can't opinion makers just *see*, Heather Mac Donald asks in "What *Really* Happened in Cincinnati" on page 28, that nothing positive can come from black rioters trashing their neighborhoods and assaulting passersby, as happened in Cincinnati in April? Riots aren't a justified response to American racism; they don't "send a message" about justice; and they have only harmful, not beneficial, consequences. They are instances of mere destructive thuggery, as Mac Donald shows with devastating thoroughness.

But white liberals respond to ghetto riots with such excitement, judges Mac Donald, because the expression of black rage against a supposedly racist society ratifies their own sense of superiority over their unenlightened, racist neighbors. In this spirit, white liberals legitimate the most extreme voices in the black community, the heirs of McWhorter's historic rebels. How much better it would be, Mac Donald says, if mainstream opinion makers would cast their spotlight on those many hardworking spokesmen in the black community who are showing the way into the mainstream, the direct descendants of those achievers whose story McWhorter so movingly tells.

At a recent rally against nonunion labor in midtown Manhattan, a T-shirt stretched tight across the ample belly of a construction worker read: NEW YORK: STILL A UNION TOWN. Alas, how true. Union power is one of the great enemies of Gotham's quality of life, as Steven Malanga's two absorbing stories make clear. "How Political Malpractice Crippled New York's Health Care" (page 44) shows how a three-way alliance, bringing together the powerful chief of the city's health and hospital workers' union with state legislators and with the high-paid heads of New York's nonprofit hospitals, has resulted in a state health-care system far more expensive than any other in the country and much lower in quality relative to the rest of the U.S. than it once was. This jobs program for mostly unskilled health-care workers also results in health insurance so expensive that 3 million New Yorkers go without it.

Similarly, the city's teachers' union is the main reason New York's public schools are so bad, particularly the 100 or so that fail to give their disadvantaged, minority pupils the basic tools they need to succeed in the city's information-age economy. It would help end this scandal if the system could reward good teachers and discourage (or fire) bad ones; but this the teachers' contract forbids. A merit-pay scheme for teachers, paying the best more and the worst less, would do wonders, Malanga argues in "Why Merit Pay Will Improve Teaching" on page 76. After all, he shows, such incentives have already worked magic in the private sector, and the various public school experiments with merit pay around the nation look promising. But Gotham's teachers' union remains opposed to the Giuliani administration's merit-pay proposals, once again shortchanging the kids whose interests they are supposed to serve. ■

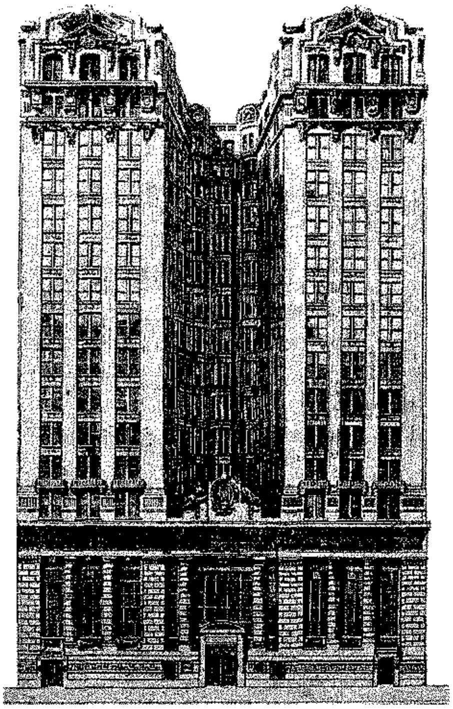
Soundings

The Scout Wars

In the latest round, the Boy Scouts do okay.

In their culture war against the Boy Scouts of America, gay activists make two charges: first, that in refusing to allow homosexual scoutmasters, the Scouts are as discriminatory as if they'd barred blacks; and second, that it is outrageous to worry that adult male homosexuals might regard underage boys as objects for seduction.

As in any war, the first victim is truth. Consider the first charge. Last June, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that the Boy Scouts of America could dismiss an adult troop leader who had challenged Scout tradition by publicly announcing his homosexuality. In doing so, the court reversed a New Jersey Supreme Court ruling that the Scouts fell under the state's Anti-Discrimination Act, which outlaws any exclusion "based on race, national origin or sexual orientation in places of public accommodation." The high court held that the Boy Scouts weren't a place of public accommodation. End of argument.


RICHARD HAAS/MICHAEL INGBAR GALLERY OF ARCHITECTURAL ART (4)

As soon as the Supreme Court decision came down, however, gay activists launched a massive public campaign to discredit the Scouts. Manifestly, they believe in the advice Beaumarchais offered long ago: "Vilify, vilify, some of it will always stick!" The liberal elites marched in lockstep. The *New York Times* even described the Scouts "as something akin to a hate group"—the same Scouts who do irreplaceable work in the inner cities helping poor, and mostly minority, kids put order and ideals into their lives.

At first, the campaign seemed to be working. The New York City school board rushed to ban city schools from sponsoring Scout activities. Framingham in Massachusetts, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Minneapolis, and Dade County, Florida—all told the Scouts they could no longer recruit in their schools. And the ever reliable ACLU has sued the city of San Diego, attempting to evict the Scouts from Balboa Park, where the organization has held annual meetings.

But to the activists' dismay, the law of unintended consequences has begun to take effect. Last September, when California Democrat Lynn Woolsey angrily introduced a bill in Congress to revoke the Scouts' national charter, the result was 362 votes in favor of retaining the charter versus 11 to do away with it. Both houses of Congress have since passed pro-Scout legislation. Whenever a United Way branch tries to cut off general funds for the Scouts, contributions flood into Scout coffers. The latest National Portrait of America poll shows that 75 percent of Americans hold a favorable view of the Scouts, versus a mere 11 percent who hold an unfavorable one.

The lesson is damning to the activists' cause. The nation—from the highest court (surprisingly, given its liberal bent on social issues) to most politicians to the average American—simply refuses to go along with the idea that the Boy Scouts' morally principled stance against homosexual behavior is a form of discrimination comparable to treating blacks or women as second-class citizens. Perhaps gay activists should listen to writer Camille Paglia (who happens to be a lesbian): "What gay ideologues . . . can't admit . . . is that heterosexuality is nature's norm."

But beyond their moral stance, the Scouts also have legitimate pragmatic reasons for saying no to homosexual scoutmasters. They're trying to keep the "chicken hawks"—victimizers of young boys—away from the chickens.

These days, you'll rarely come across accounts of male sexual predators in newspapers or on television—except, of course, if they're Catholic priests caught seducing altar boys. Only then do liberal elites seem really troubled by pederasty. Otherwise, it would seem that there *are* no youthful victims of homosexual males, even though police blotters in every city are full of incidents involving chicken hawks—and even though the North American Man/Boy Love Association, with some sympathy at least on the gay far left, continues to press for the lowering of the age of consent.

But even granting that the incidence of homosexual predation on children is low, it's still true that there's still a disturbing amount of it going on, just as there's a disturbing number of adult men sexually abusing young girls. (A recent poll shows that one out of five kids who use the Internet has been sexually propositioned online.) It's the *possibility* of violation, however unlikely, that leads the Girl Scouts to say no to male troop leaders. The same prudential reasoning supports the Boy Scouts' ban on homosexual scoutmasters.

But gay activists want no part of such reasonable thinking. For them, the envelope is there to push in their continuing assault on the common weal, common sense, and common decency.

—*Stefan Kanfer*

Blacks vs. Latinos

Does Los Angeles's recent mayoral election reveal an emerging trend in urban politics?

In the June 5 run-off in Los Angeles's mayoral race, James K. Hahn trounced fellow Democrat Antonio Villaraigosa, a hard-left "progressive" who was seeking to become the first Latino mayor since the late nineteenth century of this now nearly half-Hispanic city. The key to success for Hahn, who is white, was winning a surprising 80 percent of the black vote, offsetting the huge majority of Latinos who voted for his opponent.

The racially divided results certainly don't fit the left's playbook. Aren't blacks and Hispanics—two "oppressed peoples of color"—supposed to unite in solidarity? Un-PC as it is to say, the Los Angeles election brings to mind an old Lenny Bruce joke: "We need brotherhood in New York. Let's all of us Italian, Jewish, and Irish guys get together and beat up the Puerto Ricans."

The politics of the municipal welfare state is what's driving a wedge between blacks and Hispanics in Los Angeles and in many other cities—including New York, where Latino mayoral candidate Fernando Ferrer's hoped-for coalition between the two minority groups exists only in his head. The big, social services- and welfare-focused urban governments of the last several decades haven't dampened racial and ethnic conflict, as defenders claim, but fanned it. Urban government today is a taxpayer-financed spoils system that offers jobs, contracts, favors, and other perks to the well-connected. Urban blacks and Hispanics have traditionally organized along racial lines in the hunt for this government treasure. As Latinos have grown in population and power, blacks have become increasingly uneasy: the treasure is finite, especially in these more budget-conscious days—so what one group wins, another loses. "There's a certain rose-colored-glasses unwillingness to talk about it, but [the distrust is] there, and it's real," Harry P. Pachon, president of a Latino think tank, recently told the *New York Times*.

The struggle between blacks and Latinos for a place at the welfare-state trough presents an ideal opportunity for Republicans to make a bold case for a rival politics of urban economic growth in which *everyone* can win. Republicans can argue that such groups as the Asians and the West Indians, who have aggressively sought opportunity in America's dynamic market economy, have fared far better than groups that have sought upward mobility through the static welfare state, where those who got there before you are always in your way.

Hispanics, in particular—who've shown themselves willing to vote Republican in the past—might be open to this optimistic message.

—*William J. Stern*

Primal Fear

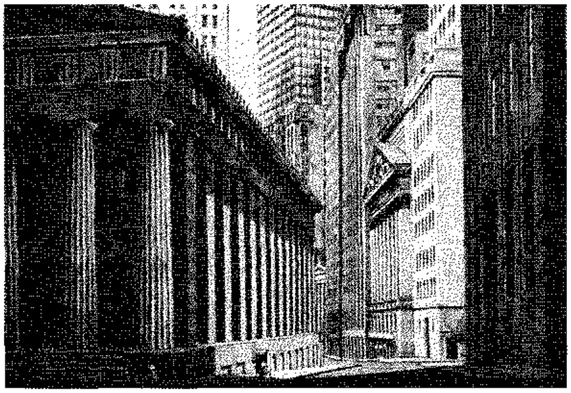
Republican bigwigs wish he'd go away, but Herman Badillo is doing the party a favor by running for mayor.

The New York Republican Party, long averse to primaries, has tried to muscle Herman Badillo out of the New York City mayor's race in favor of their anointed candidate, Michael Bloomberg. But Badillo is doing the city's listless GOP a favor by running.

Soundings

Gotham's Republicans need a jolt. After all, they've failed to capitalize on having a Republican in Gracie Mansion for eight years and another Republican in control of the statehouse for seven. City party leaders have fought with one another over the political equivalent of table scraps while GOP voter registration in the city has remained stubbornly flat. Embarrassingly, the party has had to scramble to field a slate of candidates in local elections this year, even though term limits, by tossing out scores of Democratic incumbents, have created what should be an unprecedented opportunity for the GOP.

A scrappy primary can re-invigorate the party and attract new voters. The GOP has at least a chance of appealing to moderate Democrats, worried by the leftward tilt of their party's mayoral candidates. In addition, Badillo makes a convincing case that Republicans can win over more Hispanic voters: Giuliani pulled 43 percent of the city's Hispanic vote in 1997. Moreover, approximately 10 percent of those most likely to vote in a Republican primary in the city are Hispanic.



More important, Badillo's candidacy offers a platform for ideas that might otherwise not get a hearing in this race. With the Democrats stuck in the old urban paradigm and with Bloomberg's thinking on issues largely shrouded in mystery, Badillo is thus far the only candidate willing to tout the ideas that have brought about Gotham's recovery from misgovernment.

Although party leaders shrink from Badillo's candidacy, rank-and-file Republicans relish a battle and the attention—and new voters—it could bring to the city's GOP. "Primaries are invigorating," enthuses Robert Hornack, head of the New York Young Republicans Club, which is backing Badillo. "We know it will be a contest of Republican ideas, and people will rally to the candidates. Coronations don't energize people."

—*Steven Malanga*

Harold Levy's Fuzzy Math

The chancellor becomes just another defender of the status quo.

Shortly after former Citicorp executive Harold Levy became New York's schools chancellor, he told me how disturbed he was to find that the Board of Education rarely based its policy decisions on accurate data. Since then, Levy has often said that he wants to install a modern management system, driven by rock-solid information.

So I was pleased when one of Levy's number crunchers, Andrew Rein, called a little while back to ask about an article I'd written debunking teachers' union claims that teachers were leaving city schools in droves for higher-paying suburban jobs (see "The Vanishing Teacher and Other UFT Fictions," Spring 2000). Explaining that the chancellor's office was now looking into "suburban flight," Rein asked: how did I figure out that no more than 700 teachers per year—less than 1 percent of the city's teaching force—were going to the higher-paying suburbs? After explaining my methodology, I directed Rein to University of Missouri economist Michael Podgursky, who claimed, based on his own research, that fewer than *400* city teachers had left for the suburbs in 1997–98.

Of course, if instructors really were flooding out of Gotham schools into the suburbs in search of higher pay, it would strengthen the union's case that teachers should get across-the-board salary increases in any new contract, without making concessions on merit pay or work rules. If flight to the suburbs wasn't much of a problem compared with teachers' lousy classroom performance, however, the city could plausibly insist that the system needed merit pay and work-rule changes to make teachers more accountable. Based on everything Levy had said about sound data, I expected his office to get the story right.

Imagine my surprise, then, when a *New York*

Times story in mid-April opened: "The exodus of New York City teachers to better-paying suburban districts has accelerated sharply, according to a survey conducted by Schools Chancellor Harold Levy. Nearly 1,700 teachers left the city to teach elsewhere last year, more than four times as many as in 1997–98, the survey found." The story continued: "The figures appear to confirm warnings by the teachers' union that the higher pay and better conditions in suburban schools are proving irresistible to increasing numbers of city teachers." The article then cited Deputy Schools Chancellor Anthony Shorris calling the survey "germane" to the contract negotiations.

So, did this survey represent the kind of gold-standard research that the chancellor had been promising? To find out, I asked the board for a copy. The press secretary told me that there was no survey, only a "draft" of a report—and that I couldn't see it. I then called Tony Shorris several times. Since he was so forthcoming to the *Times*, I figured, he'd be the same for me. He never returned my calls.

I eventually got hold of the "survey"—seven pages of tables and charts that the chancellor's office had sent to the *Times*. The methodology was appalling: the board derived its numbers solely from the anecdotes of school principals, who had been asked where they *thought* the teachers (some of whom had left nine months earlier) had gone. But since teachers don't have to tell principals where they're going when they quit—and even when they do tell, there's rarely an official record—the principals were relying on necessarily incomplete and fragmentary memories.

In addition, most principals reported that a teacher went to "Westchester" or "Nassau," rather than naming a particular school district, making it impossible to verify numbers by calling the school districts themselves. With its large staff, the board could have easily spent a day or two contacting every suburban district and discovering precisely how many city teachers each had hired. Why didn't they? Rein wasn't sure.

Equally galling, the chancellor's office apparently did nothing to discourage the *Times* reporter from confusing the 1,700 or so teachers recorded as going "outside NYC" with the new suburbanites. More than a third of the departures outside the city were for places like Florida, California, and foreign countries. (Teachers sometimes relocate to distant places, but that has nothing to do with the problem of transfers to cushier suburbs.) The reporter then erroneously compared the "outside NYC" category with Podgursky's figure of 400 teachers landing suburban jobs and concluded that suburban flight had increased fourfold since 1997.

Chancellor Levy offered this worthless "survey" to the *Times* knowing full well that, if reported uncritically (as it invariably was by the UFT-friendly paper), it would strengthen the union's bargaining position. If a private-sector CEO, locked in contract negotiations with his unionized employees, dared to do something similar, he'd swiftly face a stockholder revolt for neglecting company interests.

—*Sol Stern*

A Chamber of Commerce

Under its new boss, New York City's top business group is at last promoting business interests.

A chamber of commerce typically lobbies local government to slash regulations, publicly defends business interests, and offers help to small firms, right? Not in Gotham, where the New York City Partnership and Chamber of Commerce under former transit chief Robert Kiley spent much of the last half-decade pursuing activities like building subsidized housing, funding incentive programs for public school teachers and principals, and training welfare recipients for work.

The partnership's focus on social services left New York's heavily taxed business community without a public voice. The Giuliani administration complained that it couldn't even rely on the partnership's help in fighting for basic business interests like tax cuts. The Business Council of New York State grumbled publicly that the group didn't help it oppose new health-care entitlements that will cost New York firms dearly. Businesses—especially small ones—have fled the group; the partnership is down from 5,000 small-business members to a paltry 300.

The partnership's sorry recent history makes it all the more important that business-friendly Kathy Wylde, long associated with the organization, has replaced Kiley as its leader. Wylde (a *City Journal* publication committee member) wants the group to return to its traditional role of being an active pro-business voice. "Our job is to help position the New York economy to keep it competitive," she says sensibly. "That means addressing things like our airports, development of office space, energy policy. These are the issues that will appeal to business leaders in the city."

Wylde's first steps have been encouraging. She's spinning off several of the partnership's social-service programs, and she's redefining others. For example, the group's Housing Partnership, which in recent years had increasingly transformed itself into a typical nonprofit, government-subsidized housing developer, will now be—as it was in the past—a conduit through which private capital can flow into housing markets in the city's poor and middle-income neighborhoods. Wylde is also using the partnership's new pro-business approach to boost membership, trying to get small businesses involved again and reaching out to chief executives of investment funds, to money managers, and to venture capitalists—people crucial to the city's current prosperity but hitherto outside the organization.

Not a moment too soon: with Mayor Giuliani's successor likely to be a liberal Democrat, the business community will need a strong advocate for fiscal restraint and pro-growth strategies in the next four years.

—Steven Malanga

Power Vacuum

Opponents of Gotham's desperately needed new power supply are totally in the dark.

New York City's demand for electricity is fast eclipsing its supply. While last summer was unseasonably cool, demand still came perilously close to the city's peak capacity. With supplies tight, prices on the state's so-called Real Time Market (where utilities buy energy to meet short-term demand) shot up by as much as 1,800 percent. Though only 5 percent of the city's electrical supply comes from this volatile market, the peak-time price jolts (perhaps somewhat amplified by gauging) were big enough to raise consumer electricity bills by 43 percent in June.

The New York Power Authority (NYPA), estimating that the city would require at least 315 megawatts of additional daily capacity to stabilize the market and prevent future price spikes, purchased ten natural gas–powered turbine generators in late 2000 and is currently placing them on six sites citywide. Together they'll add 408 megawatts to the city's electrical capacity—enough, power providers hope, to get the city through this summer, even if it's hot enough to push the daily peak load up above 11,000 megawatts.

Shortsighted politicians and community activists, though, have charged the NYPA with "environmental racism," painting a grim picture of pollutants being "jammed down the throats" of "communities of color." They want the sites to undergo laborious 14-month environmental reviews—not legally required for plants operating at this low level of capacity. For their part, the New York State Assembly Democrats, rather than building new capacity, want to impose price caps and spend $1.5 billion on conservation and alternative energy sources in order to deal with the power shortage.

These are woefully wrongheaded ideas. The environmental racism charge is spurious. The ready availability of cheap empty lots close to high-pressure gas lines and high-voltage substations—not racism—sparked the speedy placement of these generators. Though conservation programs might eventually save a few hundred megawatts, they cannot provide for the city's ever swelling need, and alternative energy sources are not sufficiently cost- and space-efficient to be the answer (see "How Cities Green the Planet," Winter, 2000). In a growing economy, new consumption—more people, holding more jobs, using more powerful and power-hungry computers—will quickly gobble up the energy saved by such tinkering at the edges. As for price controls: California has shown that they generate only shortages.

A steady supply of cheap, clean energy is essential to New York's future prosperity. As Peter Huber, author of a forthcoming book on energy policy, observes: "Gotham used to import fabric and export garments; now it imports electrons and exports bits." Electricity is the lifeblood of the city's dynamic economy, sustaining its industries and its infrastructure. A prolonged heat wave this summer could trigger blackouts, resulting not only in dozens of heat-related deaths but also in hundreds of millions of dollars in economic damage.

Soundings

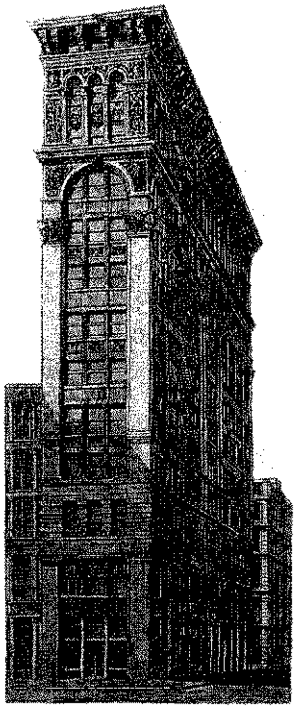
These ten hotly contested turbines provide only a small fraction of the additional power New York will need five years from now, estimated at between 2,000 and 3,000 megawatts a day. We'll need bright state and city political leadership—willing to consider new and updated transmission lines, and the use of nuclear power plants—to keep the city plugged in.

—*Edward John Craig*

Is the Family Coming Back?

The 2000 Census says maybe.

The initial take on the 2000 Census made for pretty grim reading—the latest chapter in an ongoing "Demise-of-Ozzie-and-Harriet" saga. FOR THE FIRST TIME NUCLEAR FAMILIES DROP BELOW 25 PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS, trumpeted the *New York Times* headline. A *Newsweek* cover story purported to explain WHY THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY IS FADING FAST.



Turns out that the real story, which almost everyone missed, is brighter. For the first time since the family began to crumble in the late 1960s, there are signs that it has stopped declining and may even be coming back. Yes, people are marrying later and living longer, so we've got more singles, widows, and empty nesters dragging down married families as a percentage of the total population—hence the gloomy headlines. But look closely and you'll see that the percentage of American children living in married families is, at 70 percent, around where it was a decade ago.

And on the single-mother front the news is even more encouraging. The liberal Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, parsing the census data, found that, from 1995 to 2000, the proportion of kids living with single mothers fell a stunning 8 percent—2 percent from 1999 to 2000 alone. The percentage of black kids living with married parents shot up from 34.8 percent to nearly 39 percent—a substantial upturn after years of decline. Welfare guru Mickey Kaus crunched the numbers further: after the black out-of-wedlock birthrate peaked at just over 70 percent in 1994, he discovered, the married birthrate jumped up 5 percent in as many years. Welfare reform anyone?

If the family isn't "fading fast," though, its health is far from assured. One reason a smaller proportion of kids lives with single mothers, the CBPP numbers show, is the surging immigration of Asians and Hispanics, who come to this country with strong families. Another reason is that more children live with single dads or with mom and her boyfriend—who may or may not be the child's dad.

The biggest reason not to break out the wedding champagne yet, however, is that elite opinion still treats adult self-realization and sexual freedom as more important than children's needs. The 1996 welfare reform bill is up for reauthorization next year, and already feminist groups are gearing up to make sure pro-marriage initiatives won't be part of any new welfare bill. In New York, all four Democratic mayoral candidates back a City Council measure that requires firms to provide domestic-partner benefits if they want to do business with the city—a sure way to demote the status of traditional marriage. But the winner of the "Kids Last" award has to be a *New York Times* front-page story—on Father's Day, no less—toasting the rising number of single fathers as a happy sign of eroding gender stereotypes. The writer never bothered mentioning that it is divorce and, in some cases, child abandonment that drives this "revolution."

Troubling, too, was a recent Gallup poll that found that only 16 percent of twentysomethings think that marriage's main purpose is to raise children. A disturbing 62 percent say it's okay for a woman to have a child on her own; 43 percent believe that government should provide couples shacking up with the same benefits as married couples. If this is our future, those "fading fast" headlines may turn out true. —*Kay S. Hymowitz*

Still Revolting

A college president can't tell the difference between liberty and libertinism.

Back in 1997, the State University of New York at New Paltz made headlines with its day-long conference "Revolting Behavior: The Challenge of Women's Sexual Freedom." Sponsored by the Women's Studies Program, the event boasted workshops like "Sex Toys for Women," at which the owner of a New York sex boutique illustrated the uses of various sexual appliances (all helpfully on sale later that day), and "Safe, Sane, and Consensual S/M: An Alternative Way of Loving," at which interested students could "explore society's perception of [sadomasochism] and find out what it means to the people within the S/M community." Ah those bright college years! "Revolting Behavior" provoked harsh words from many critics, including Governor George Pataki. SUNY trustee Candace de Russy, among others, called for the dismissal of New Paltz president Roger Bowen, who in turn vigorously defended the conference.

Bowen remains unrepentant. In May, he publicly blasted the Pataki administration for politicizing the university and endangering academic freedom. He fretted over the effect the administration's pressure was having on "critical thinking" on campus and cautioned that the meddling threatened to upset "the genteel world of the academy."

Who knew Bowen had unexploited gifts as a stand-up comedian? To describe today's academy—obsessed with outlandish sexual practices, awash with programmatic anti-Americanism, and deeply hostile to the values of Western civilization—as "genteel" is, if not comic, then foolish or hypocritical. And what critical thinking does Bowen have in mind? Perhaps "How to Get What You Want in Bed," an "interactive group workshop" at the "Revolting Behavior" conference? Please.

More seriously, Bowen invokes academic freedom as "the lifeblood of the academy." He's right, of course. But such freedom isn't the same thing as its perverted caricature. It no more gives a carte-blanche to sell dildos in the groves of academe than the First Amendment guarantees the right to receive public funds to celebrate sadomasochism. Academic freedom isn't a talisman transforming the campus into a zone beyond good and evil. It is the assurance that professors pursuing truth are safe from interference.

Sadly, these crucial distinctions escape Roger Bowen. Knowing that dark warnings of the academy under siege can nearly always cow liberals, he's managed not only to remain head of a large public university but also to transform himself into an icon of the left. SUNY New Paltz's trustees should do some genuine critical thinking and remove a president who has become one of American higher education's biggest embarrassments.

—*Roger Kimball*

Puffing Puff Daddy

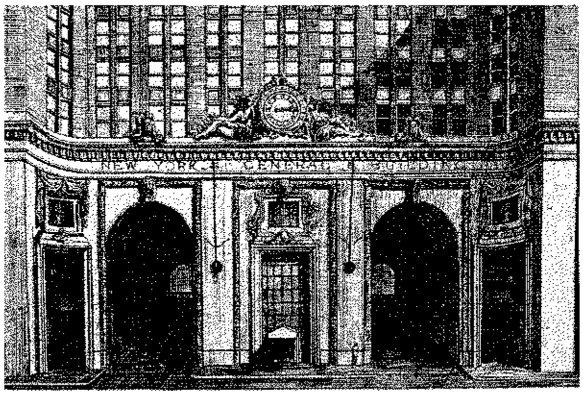
Beware of the elites bearing praise.

Genuflection to popular culture's worst products is today a sign both of enlightenment and of a properly generous democratic sentiment. A striking example recently appeared in the *Guardian* newspaper, the house journal of the British liberal intelligentsia. The article, RHYME AND REASON, proclaimed in attention-grabbing big type that "Some of America's big minds have gathered in New York for a major summit." And who are those minds? The nation's Nobel Prize–winning physicists or medical researchers, perhaps? Its best historians or mathematicians?

No: some of the biggest minds belong, apparently, to rap performers such as Chuck D of Public Enemy, JT Money, and Puff Daddy, who had come together at the summit to explore rap culture. In the photographs that accompany the article, the rappers appear virtually indistinguishable from street thugs, with the sullen stare of the unintelligently angry.

Could the *Guardian* really believe that these scions and creators of a worthless subculture, which glorifies inner-city violence and treats women with savage contempt, are powerful thinkers? Could it really believe that "[t]he obscenity is not the vulgarity coming from the mouths of the rappers but the society in which they were born and raised"? The paper invests the sordid and stupid with a kind a tragic grandeur. "If [rap's] leading figures have been behaving as though they are leaders of troubled lands," the article suggests, "it is because they have only recently emerged from their own bloody civil war."

Does it matter that a major liberal organ should flatter rap stars in this way? Flattery is, of course, a kind of condescension: the insincerity that grants a big mind to Puff Daddy shouldn't need pointing out. Alas, the worst effect of such flattery will be on inner-city neighborhoods, to whose most disorderly and crime-prone residents it will filter down that the liberal elite approves of their "culture." Why try to do better? Once again, liberal insincerity betrays those on whose behalf it claims to speak.



—*Theodore Dalrymple*

RoboCops

It's time for the NYPD to computerize its paperwork.

With thousands of cops eligible to retire over the next few years, New York's Finest may soon face a big manpower problem. One solution: using technology to improve officer productivity. The NYPD may enjoy a well-deserved reputation for high-tech crime-fighting—Compstat, the force's computerized crime-tracking system, is the envy of police departments around the world—but when it comes to managing daily precinct operations, it sometimes still seems stuck in the 1930s.

Consider a typical precinct, in the Bronx, I recently visited in the Police Foundation's "Commanding Officer for a Day" program. As the precinct captain proudly showed me his mini-Compstat center and the snazzy machine that took digital fingerprints of suspects and compared them electronically with city and state databases, I couldn't help notice that his desk lacked a computer—as was true of every officer's desk I saw. Amazingly in a digital age, officers were still laboriously logging in suspects by hand in a huge book at the station desk and slowly writing up crime reports using clunky typewriters—which, at least, were electric.

According to former Massachusetts Secretary of Public Safety Kathleen O'Toole, the average police officer spends at least one-third of his time processing paperwork. Digitizing it could free up an enormous number of man-hours for the NYPD, allowing cops to spend more time on the street, fighting crime—and making the problem of replacing retiring officers less pressing. True, the cost would run well into the millions in the short term. But the potential boon in efficiency would repay the investment.

Admittedly, the NYPD has a poor record in computerizing administrative work. An effort a few years ago to track seized and stored property by computer—the existing paper-based system, nearly 80 years old, relied on 100 different forms and took 300 cops to do the paperwork—never got off the ground because of bureaucratic foot-dragging and because the force lacked the necessary high-tech skills.

But other forces are rapidly moving ahead with digitizing paperwork. Santa Clara, California's police department, to take just one cutting-edge example, has outfitted traffic cops with Palm Pilots that they'll soon use to write up reports on the beat and zap them wirelessly into a central police database, without having to trudge back to the station to fill out paperwork. If Santa Clara can do it, why not New York? Eight years ago, the NYPD showed it could use sophisticated technology to help cut crime. Now it's time to use it to slash bureaucracy, too.

—*Henry Olsen*

Toward a Usable Black History

It will help black Americans to recall that they have a history that transcends victimization and exclusion.

John H. McWhorter

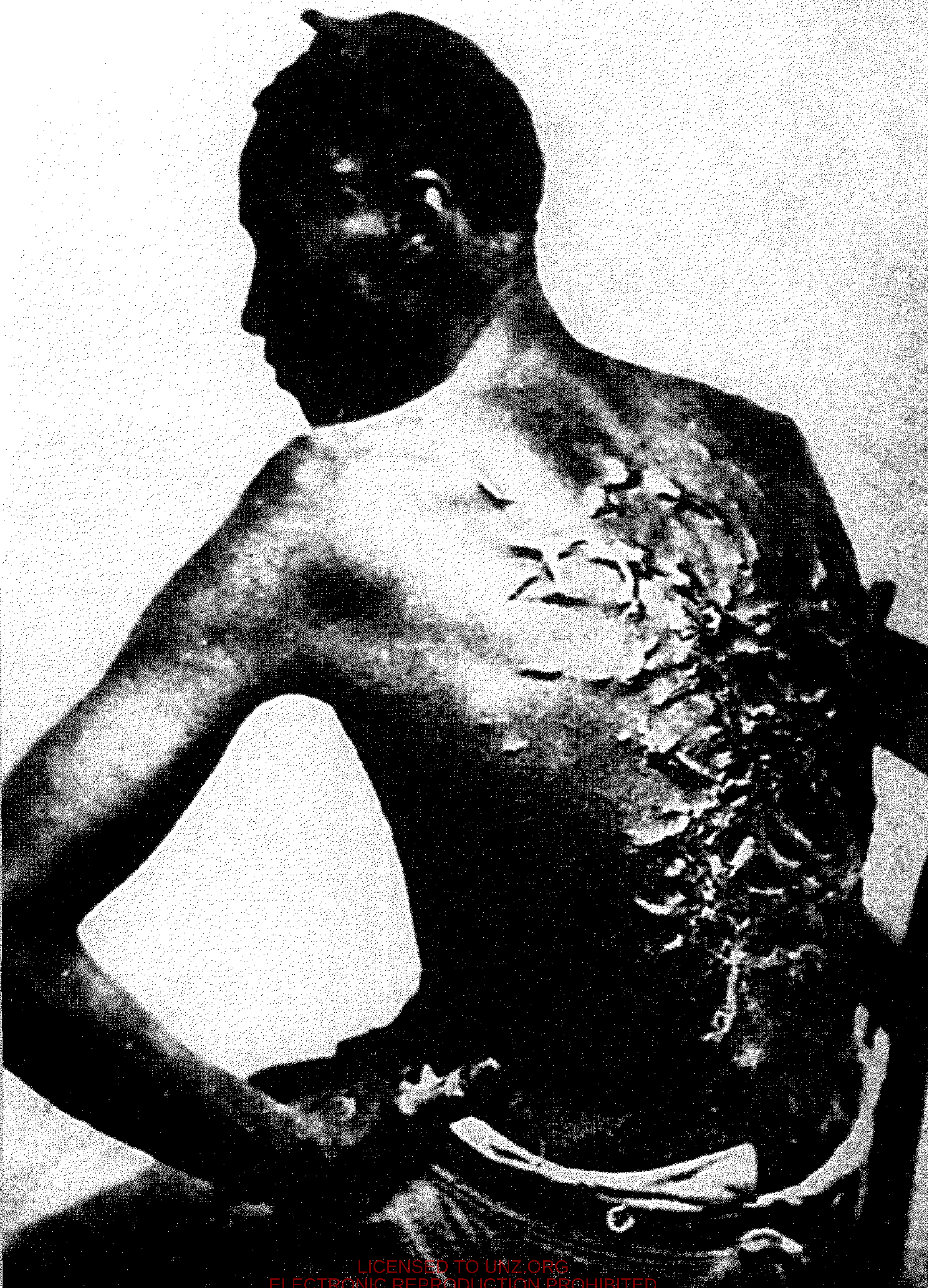
"You brought me here in CHAINS! You brought me here in CHAINS!" James Baldwin exclaimed to a white interviewer in the late 1960s, summing up the sense of our history that most blacks have. Yes, we pay lip service to our having "survived" in this country, but the image most resonant to us is being brought here packed in ships, treated like animals for 250 years, and pushed to the margins of society for the next 100. Many black thinkers downplay even the "survival," depicting modern black America as a variation on slavery and dismissing the progress we've made since the 1960s by condemning successful blacks as "house niggers." The result: for most of us, "black history" summons images of endless degradation—slavery, the quick demise of Reconstruction, *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, the Klan, lynchings, the beatings of civil rights activists, Dred Scott, Emmett Till.

Not to attend to such things would be folly; but a history only of horrors cannot inspire. What could be more demoralizing than Mba Mbulu's *Ten Lessons: An Introduction to Black History*, for example, a chronicle mostly of slavery and segregation, with "White People's Attacks on Other People" and "Back in Our Place" as typical chapter titles? Except for a little dollop of blacks' contributions to what is called "White History," the overall message is a grim saga of victimization. This kind of history is deeply damaging to blacks. When "Learn your history" means "Don't get fooled by superficial changes," today's New York City Street Crimes Unit can't be distinguished from yesterday's Bull Connor, and our aggrieved despair over our sense of disinclusion from the national fabric remains as sharp as ever. Could any people find inner peace when taught to think of their own society as their enemy?

Our question, then, is whether black history offers us lessons beyond teaching us that we are eternally strangers in our own land. This is a momentous question: we can only feel a visceral sense of legitimacy on our own soil when black identity is not founded on a sense of whites as the enemy without—when we feel American first and black second, which is far from the case today. Today's diversity fans will object that this goal smacks of the erasure of a culture. And in a way, they are correct: once wariness between groups disappears, people marry across ethnic lines and create a new hybrid people. History records no exceptions; love knows no bounds.

In real life, the "salad bowl" metaphor that diversity fans use to describe our proper relation to American life can only describe a temporary stage and shouldn't be our ultimate goal. To be sure, many blacks, and many white fellow travelers, see the

The scars borne by this slave in Louisiana in 1863 remain fresh.



competing "melting pot" metaphor as threatening. But since only assimilation will give black Americans a sense of America as a homeland rather than a place of temporary residence, a truly useful black history must teach black Americans that the melting pot is possible and desirable. Yes, residual racism persists in America and must be identified and expunged. But a black history whose main message is "Watch out!" sows cynicism and parochialism and can only point us backward. The history blacks learn must prepare us to take advantage of the ever richer opportunities available to us rather than to resist them as selling out to the Man.

Yet we were indeed brought here in chains. Is there anything in our deeply troubled story in America to give us the courage to get past this and embrace becoming, to the depths of our being, American?

We'll never do it by one popular approach black historians have taken. The sense that what has happened to us in this country is too demoralizing to focus on has led them to parse our time here as a gloomy second act, after a glorious and untainted first act in Mother Africa.

Hence Kwanzaa, for example, created in 1966 by Afrocentric scholar-activist Maulana Karenga and modeled on African harvest celebrations. It is founded on seven guiding principles with Swahili names, most stressing collectivist ideas, from unity (*umoja*) and collective responsibility (*ujima*) to cooperative economics (*ujamaa*). Yet after 35 years, few black Americans practice Kwanzaa; Hallmark may have released a line of Kwanzaa cards, but I would venture that 19 out of 20 blacks would draw a blank on the seven principles, and Christmas remains as central to the black experience as it was in 1966.

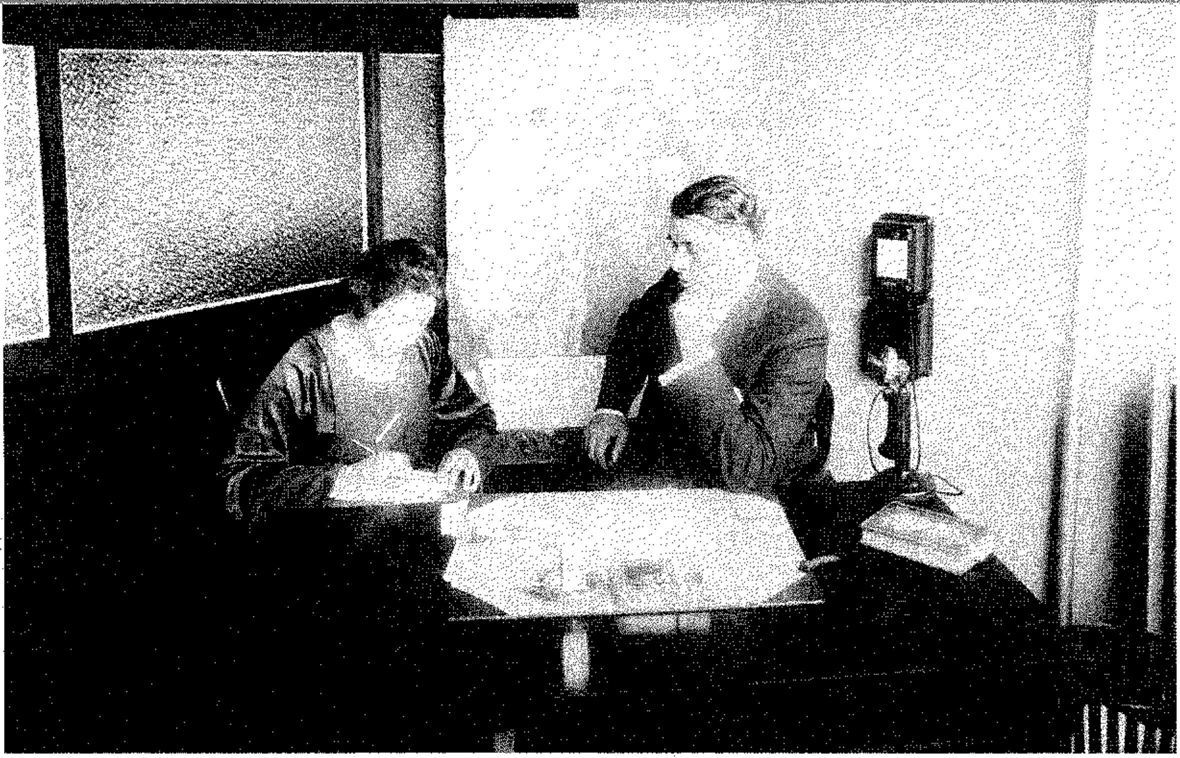
Let's face it: calls to found our identities upon Mother Africa are asking us to pretend to feel living kinship with people who speak languages we do not know, who neither move, dance, cook, sing, nor view the world the way we do. We are asked to adopt a "culture" that never existed: the monocultural conception of "Africa" is a post-colonial construction, essentializing the peoples of an enormous continent home to over 1,000 languages, with even Swahili spoken in only eight of the more than 50 African nations. Afrocentrists here fall prey to the American tendency to see Africa as a continent of indistinguishable "black people," but the Africans who sold one another into slavery were certainly under no illusion that "black" overrode cultural differences. For a descendant of Sierra Leoneans to learn Swahili and cherry-pick aspects of assorted African cultures is like a white American of Welsh ancestry slipping on some Dutch clogs and breaking into a Russian trépak, while exclaiming in Portuguese that, after all, "Europe is Europe."

Since most black Americans cannot know exactly what parts of Africa they trace to, perhaps pan-Africanism is the best we can do. But the artificiality remains. Culture sits in the heart; a holiday made up at someone's desk a few decades ago cannot help but sit in the head. Kwanzaa asks the black car salesman in Chicago to celebrate the first fruits of the harvest in a Ugandan village. Obviously, we—as a people so deeply American—need something beyond this.

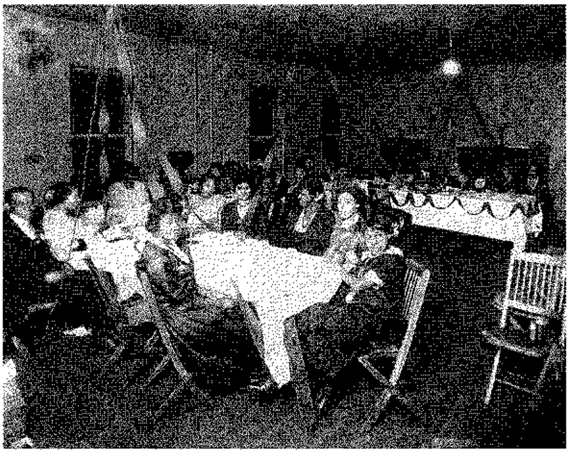
Then there is the Afrocentric history school, founded on the idea that the ancient Egyptians were black, that the ancient Greeks stole their philosophy from Egypt, and that the Western intellectual heritage was therefore a black creation. Advocates cherish this idea as giving black students a sense of historical importance, but Afrocentric history is false, based on laughably sloppy scholarship. Mary Lefkowitz's *Not Out of Africa* has refuted all of its tenets, and, despite the predictable cries of racism and right-wing backlash, no Afrocentric historian has presented a factual rebuttal. The facts are simply too clear to refute.

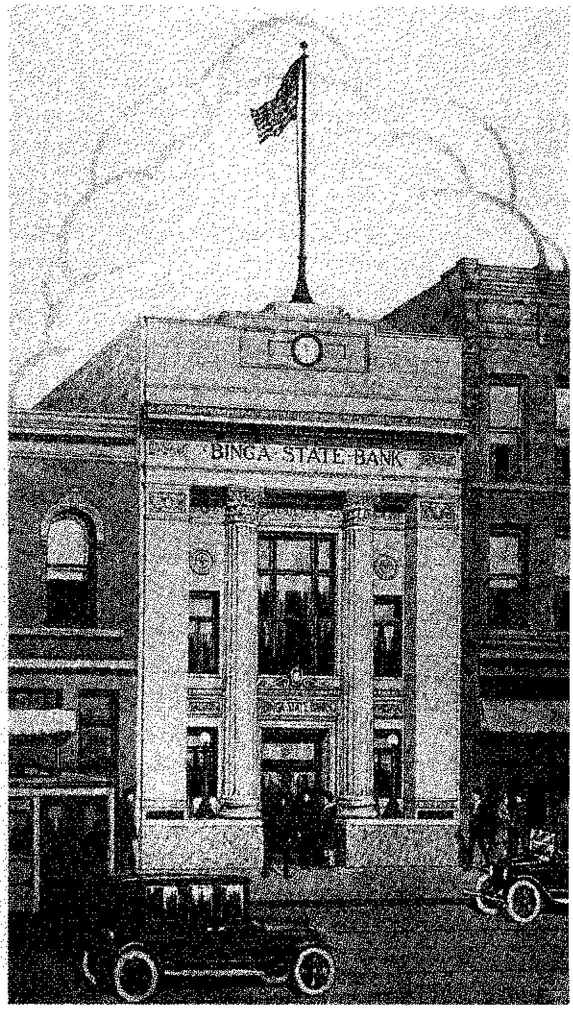
Afrocentric history takes us away from becoming fully American in another way, too. It is difficult to feel truly a member of a society that you suspect considers you slightly dim. How realistic is it to expect to be accepted as mental equals, when blacks presenting themselves as "professors" frame our history as a mythical narrative, as if we were preliterate hunter-gatherers? And especially when the

Beginning around 1875, Chicago's "Bronzeville" nourished flourishing businesses such as (clockwise from top) the Nile Queen Corp, whose president is pictured, and the Binga State Bank, along with civic organizations like the Reverend R. C. Ranson's Bethel AME Church and the YWCA, whose 1921 Glee Club banquet is pictured.



CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY (4)




BINGA STATE BANK

narrative is a tissue of fabrications anyway, how constructive is it to foist upon us a "history" that only heightens our sense of embattlement and alienation?

Black Americans will never again live in Africa; our connection to it will remain largely gestural. Charting that connection is valuable in itself: I have devoted much of my own academic career to doing this on the topic of Creole languages. But beyond the ceremonial and the academic, a conception of ourselves as balefully conflicted victims of a diaspora from an alien continent will serve no purpose in giving us a sense of rootedness in the only country we will ever know as home.

Why can't we get that sense from the pantheon of black heroes amply celebrated in TV documentaries or in Black History *Month*—upgraded from what used to be a week? The truth is that the big pictures of Harriet Tubman, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Mary McLeod Bethune, Paul Robeson, Medgar Evers, and so on that festoon urban public libraries every February, the "Great Blacks in History" calendars hanging in the typical black barbershop, and children's books like the endlessly reprinted *Color Me Brown* are about as inspirational to most blacks as Mount Rushmore is to most whites. We genuflect—but we do not *feel*.

The reasons for this are local to our moment. Because many black Americans today have drunk in a conception of racism as a perpetual obstacle rather than a surmountable inconvenience, they see black heroes less as inspirations than as exceptions to the rule. Sure, they admire Harriet Tubman; but it is a different thing to transform this formal esteem into a sense of individual empowerment, when so many modern black thinkers and leaders insist that black success is merely a matter of a few tokens let through a crack in the door. Instead of being moved by our heroes, we see them as beside the point.

Furthermore, today's sense that "real" black people define themselves against the mainstream has a way of blunting the inspiration that blacks once derived from figures like Marian Anderson and George Washington Carver, who made their mark in equaling whites in a race-neutral activity. In a black popular culture that celebrates rebellion, that enshrines as "authentic" the antisocial tendencies that early civil rights leaders deplored, it is not an accident that Malcolm X is the most beloved black figure of the past among young blacks. Within our Zeitgeist, Phillis Wheatley's ability to write classical poetry in English after having been born in Africa and taken into slavery elicits respect but not identification. After 1960s radicals lambasted Pulitzer Prize–winning poet Gwendolyn Brooks for conforming to "white" norms, any aspiring black poet was unlikely to seek inspiration from an ancestor who took her cue from the likes of Alexander Pope.

If black history in America really had been a mere matter of a few superstars rising above a vale of tears, then our past would be of little genuine use to us, and the best we could do would be to counsel spiritual fortitude. But in fact, ordinary blacks, bonding together on the communal level like all successful immigrant groups, have forged spectacular successes in America. A pernicious ideological tradition, dismissive of the power of human agency and romanticizing failure, has painted over glorious aspects of blacks' story in America with dutiful recitations of the horrors and setbacks, hoodwinking blacks into thinking that it was ever thus.

Urban black business districts will serve as Exhibit A in a new black history, an antidote to the view that between the demise of Reconstruction and the Harlem Renaissance there's little but lynching and *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*. During this very period, blacks were building thriving commercial districts of their own. Henry Louis Gates Jr. has remarked: "What really captivated me was that in the all-black world of *Amos 'n' Andy* . . . there was an all-black department store, owned and operated by black attendants for a black clientele." Ideally, more blacks would know that such worlds-within-a-world *actually existed*.

Chicago's "Bronzeville" is a handy example. As the city industrialized after 1875, blacks occupied a three-by-15-block enclave on the South Side, and the Great Migration from the South swelled the black population to 109,548 by 1920. Bronzeville, also known as "Black Metropolis," was home to several black newspapers, including the *Bee*, which occupied a magnificent Art Deco building, and the *Defender*, a publication of national influence, whose editorials urging blacks to migrate from the South were a major spur for the Great Migration itself. The

CORBIS

BETTMAN/CORBIS

SIPA PRESS

Bronzeville's culture of achievement encouraged such jazz greats as (clockwise from top) Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong, as well as more than 100 doctors, including heart-surgery pioneer Daniel Hale Williams.

literary-minded of Bronzeville also had such news magazines available to them as *The Half-Century* and *The Light.*

It was said that if you held up a horn at State and 35th, it would play itself because of the musical winds always blowing. Bronzeville was a leading center of innovation in jazz, nurturing Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, and Earl "Fatha" Hines. Oscar Micheaux's film company, producing a pioneering *oeuvre* of "race movies," was based not in New York or Hollywood but Bronzeville.

For all the jazz and journalism, though, at the end of the day, the business of Bronzeville was business: there were 731 business establishments in 1917, in 61 different lines of work. Of several banks, the most prominent was the Binga State Bank founded in 1908, Jesse Binga having begun with a coal, oil, and gas wagon and parlayed this into realty investments. Many other Bronzeville blacks purchased real estate just as avidly, amassing holdings that totaled $100 million by 1929. Several magnificent buildings besides the one housing the *Bee* ornamented Bronzeville, including the Overton Hygienic—which contained a cosmetics firm, a life-insurance

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

COURTESY OF DUNBAR HIGH SCHOOL

company, a major bank, and a drugstore—and the seven-floor Knights of Pythias building, put up by one of the district's innumerable lodges (the inspiration for the Mystic Knights of the Sea on *Amos 'n' Andy*, which took place in Chicago in its original incarnation). The district boasted seven insurance companies, 106 lawyers, and several hotels, including "The Finest Colored Hotel in the World," the Hotel Brookmont.

This was a thriving civic community, supporting branches of various civic organizations, including a YMCA settlement house that ran job-training programs. There were no fewer than 192 churches in Bronzeville by 1929, the flagship being Olivet Baptist with 10,000 members. Bronzeville churches stressed community uplift; they ran lodging facilities for new arrivals from the South and employment agencies to shunt them into the workforce. Olivet alone had 53 departments devoted to community programs. Bronzeville produced several political leaders, including the first black congressman since Reconstruction, Oscar DePriest. Provident was one of the top black hospitals in the country, employing many of black Chicago's (by 1929) 176 doctors and running a nursing school. One of Provident's founders was the extraordinary Daniel Hale Williams, who was the first doctor in America to operate upon the human heart and the only black doctor among the 100 charter members of the American College of Surgeons.

BETTMAN/CORBIS (2)

Until the 1950s, some black schools were models of scholarly achievement, none more so than Washington, D.C.'s Dunbar High, whose honor society is pictured at left, and whose graduates included Senator Edward Brooke (above) and William Hastie (below), the first black federal judge.

Bronzeville's leaders, clearly, had their eyes on community stability and self-sufficiency. As uncultivated new arrivals from the rural South flooded the city after the 1890s, the black middle class did not cherish them as more "authentic" versions of themselves; they unequivocally saw themselves as models for the new masses. Walters African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church's pastor William A. Blackwell matter-of-factly noted that the migrants, "while speaking the same language as we do, are in many cases little more accustomed to the freedom of this city, the habits and customs of our people, than is the newly arrived peasant from Europe. These people must be amalgamated and assimilated." There was no question of adopting working-class ambivalence toward striving, no question of teaching the district's residents to distrust black successes as "selling out." Quite the contrary: in 1929, a chronicle of Bronzeville's rise counseled, "The Old Negro teaches his children to fear an authoritative white person and to disrespect intelligent and cultured persons of their own race in the same position; the New Negro teaches his children to fear no one and to respect every one worthy of respect."

The New Negro certainly didn't romanticize the black criminal as a martyr, either, despite whites' restriction of blacks to menial jobs until well into the teens. Bronzeville's civic organizations agitated constantly for cleaning up seedy streets and disciplining criminals for the benefit of the community. In 2000, Jesse Jackson decried as "racist" the suspension of black Decatur teenagers who had engaged in a brawl in the stands during a football game. In telling contrast, Dr. George C. Hall of the Chicago National Urban League branch complained in 1917: "The delinquent colored boy or girl who is taken to the juvenile court is turned out again on probation to learn more. If Chicago lacks the vision to see ahead, it will reap the harvest of fostering a kindergarten on the streets where gamins learn crime."

Nor was Bronzeville a fluke: the all-black world now so often considered a fantasy in *Amos 'n' Andy* also existed in West Baltimore, Atlanta's Auburn Avenue district, Washington, D.C.'s Shaw neighborhood, and elsewhere.

A usable black history can't avoid recounting the demise of these districts. It must cover the race riot that destroyed Tulsa's Greenwood district and the Great Depression's effect on Bronzeville. But simply to treat these districts as an object lesson in white malevolence will extinguish the soul rather than kindle it. Our historical account must show that when blacks were relegated to separate quarters of a big city after Emancipation, the immediate result was not Washington, D.C.'s "Barrytown." Even in a period of naked discrimination, the human spirit bore fruit, and thoroughly ordinary black people again and again created a "Chocolate City" on the middle-class American model and could not have imagined doing otherwise.

Today we assume that in any black community an educational crisis must be in full swing. But that wasn't the case in Bronzeville: truancy rates were no higher than among Chicago's white students, and black students performed scholastically as well as white ones. But today's consensus view of the history of black education sees an unrelieved procession from the substandard segregated schools of the South to the inner-city sinkhole schools in today's headlines.

A history ushering blacks into a sense of true membership in their country must make clear that the execrable inner-city schools Jonathan Kozol loves to describe are products of our own times, not business as usual for blacks. From the late 1800s to the 1950s, several black schools were models of scholarly achievement. Students at Washington, D.C.'s Dunbar High, named for the black poet, often outscored the city's white schools on standardized tests as early as 1899. Schools such as Frederick Douglass in Baltimore, Booker T. Washington in Atlanta, P.S. 91 in Brooklyn, McDonough 35 in New Orleans, and many others operated at a similarly high level.

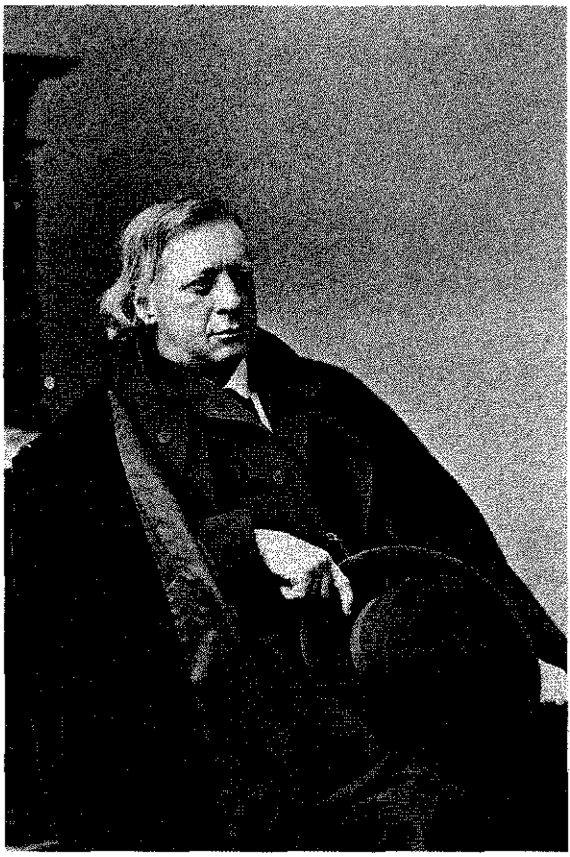
Dunbar alone produced Charles Drew (discoverer of blood plasma), Edward Brooke (the twentieth century's first black senator), William Hastie (the first black federal judge), and other prominent figures. As Thomas Sowell puts it, the sheer weight of accomplished black people that schools like Dunbar produced "suggests some systematic social process at work, rather than anything as geographically random as outstanding individual ability."

Meanwhile, the top black colleges were also providing students with fine educations. The students at Fisk (my mother's alma mater) were put through their paces in Horace and Livy, and graduate W. E. B. Du Bois went on to write his doctoral thesis in German. A Fisk professor's wife was aghast at the news that Talladega (my aunt's alma mater) in Alabama did not even require Greek and Latin for the bachelor's degree.

In an age when existing social and economic inequalities are so often mistaken as the decrees of immutable destiny, the fact that these schools existed and that blacks excelled in them as a matter of course, can seem incredible: all the more reason that historians need to bring them to life in all their vivid glory for a much larger audience than the ones that academic chroniclers, such as the invaluable Thomas Sowell, have reached. Otherwise, collective black success again gets lost in the cracks of an historiography dedicated to stressing the obstacles and setbacks.

One result of that victim-centered approach is the trendy contention that American education is constitutionally inappropriate to the "African" soul, a view Carter G. Woodson memorably espouses in *The Mis-education of the Negro.* Don't underestimate the influence of this notion: witness the Ebonics movement or the resonant title of the recent megahit black pop recording "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill." The excellent black schools and colleges that actually existed succeeded without Afrocentric curricula. In fact, Dunbar taught Latin into the 1950s, and in the late 1800s black college students often—and famously—took top honors over whites in oratory, and not in the artful slang of "slam poetry," but in literary standard English.

Alone, a photograph of black students in a schoolroom in 1900, with their hair parted down the middle, will make little lasting impression, even with a long explanatory caption. Our new history must present them in ways that encourage thinking beyond the box that constricts us today. To show the power of agency over obstacles, our account must stress that these schools operated on substandard budgets, often with creaky physical plants. To counter the misimpression of many blacks that these schools only catered to a rarefied and light-skinned *crème de la crème,* we must show that many of these schools educated as many lower-income blacks as more fortunate ones.


THE GRANGER COLLECTION

America always has had whites, like Henry Ward Beecher, who have fought for black dignity.

Armed with the knowledge that ordinary blacks have been capable of stunning successes in this country despite racism, students of the new black history will then be ready to understand the debate between W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington in a new and more inspiring way. Washington has turned into a bogeyman, the archetypal black sellout, his name virtually a curse: I am beginning to lose count of how often I have been called "a Booker T. Washington" by my detractors. His lifetime of dedication to black uplift has been boiled down into a sour parable that pits Washington, a quisling who urged blacks to roll over and tolerate racism and content themselves with manual labor, against nobly defiant Du Bois, the incarnation of black pride. Trouble is, this reduction of Washington to an object lesson in how not to be black deprives us of a role model more useful to us today than Du Bois.

Contrary to the fantasy black radicals nurse (though most seem never to have read more than two sentences he ever wrote), Washington's message was not that blacks should turn the other cheek. Two decades before he ever jostled with Du Bois, he was asserting that of course "there should be no unmanly cowering or stooping to satisfy unreasonable whims of the Southern white man." Washington's chariness about active protest stemmed not from weakness or lack of concern, but from being born a slave in the Deep South and witnessing implacable racism at much closer hand than Du Bois did in his burgherly upbringing in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. From that experience, it's little wonder that Washington believed blacks would be better off attaining the bread-and-butter skills necessary to building a solid working-class economic base than fighting what he saw as a Sisyphean battle to seize control of public offices. The parable that fashions Washington into merely a foil for black "authenticity" has his teachings stopping here; but this was only a first step. His fundamental idea was that racism was more likely to abate as a result of concrete black accomplishments than on the basis of abstract spiritual appeals.

> **"Blacks have wasted energy bemoaning racism and passively assuming that it makes black success impossible."**

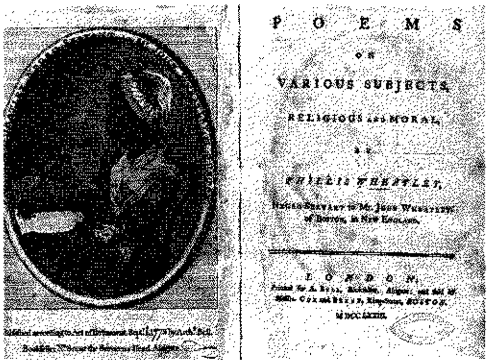
Okay, Washington was behind the curve in some ways. Notwithstanding his call for ex-slaves to build an economic base in the South rather than risk the uncertainties of migrating north, blacks who did make the Great Migration found rich opportunities. Meanwhile, the successes of the graduates of schools like Dunbar and Howard discredited his call for blacks to postpone higher education until they had spent decades establishing themselves materially.

Yet meanwhile, Du Bois was urging blacks to nurture a "double consciousness," as much "African" as American. That's one of the central themes of *The Souls of Black Folk*, and no one has rendered it as artfully as Du Bois before or since. But this ideology, with its call to treat our problems as those of "brown people" throughout the world, had nothing whatever to do with building the great black business districts. For all its grandeur, nothing in Du Bois's philosophy could inspire the concrete glories of a Bronzeville.

When it came to concrete action, Du Bois was more interested in an elite "talented tenth" of educated black people providing "guidance" for the masses, seeking public offices and articulately protesting the barriers to attaining them. For most blacks today, this approach has more appeal than Washington's tack, especially since protest in Du Bois's vein eventually created the civil rights miracle. I myself would rather have had dinner with Du Bois than with Washington. Yet Washington's philosophy was by no means bankrupt: just as he predicted, the trend was indeed for blacks to attain significant offices *after* translating the financial clout of these districts into political power. While Du Bois's unruffled elitism, with its presumption that black success would be driven by superstars, might raise a measure of democratic skepticism in us today, Washington was trying to show how we could *all* be agents of our own success—and history has borne him out just as decisively as it has Du Bois.

Deep down, we all know that no amount of sloganeering and posturing can replace concrete accomplishment in inspiring respect. This was Booker T. Washington's message, and it must come through in how we remember him. Too often since the 1960s, blacks have wasted their energies bemoaning racism and passively assuming that it makes black success impossible. This therapeutic approach had nothing to do with building the Binga Bank or Olivet Baptist, and it springs not from Washington but Du Bois, whose driving force, at the end of the day, was his profound indignation that blacks were not allowed to be, essentially, white. And he had a point: our ultimate goal indeed must be that blacks and whites learn the same things, have the same jobs, and cherish the same cultural ideals—that blacks become Americans.

Only when we understand these lessons—that we can all be the agents of our own success and that the striving of ordinary blacks once created vibrant, successful communities—will the "Blacks in Wax" come alive as useful role models to identify with rather than merely to respect, and as figures who can point us in the direction of feeling American in the heart rather than only in the head. Today's tendency to find visceral inspiration only from black rebels like Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael follows naturally from the prevailing conception of blacks as eternal expatriates from Africa, loath to embrace the mores of a "foreign" land whose rulers allow only a token few to rise above poverty. But if we understand that for a century in America blacks created communities of achievement, which nourished both solid citizens and figures of spectacular accomplishment, we can accept the idea of becoming American as business as usual for blacks.


POEMS
ON
VARIOUS SUBJECTS,
RELIGIOUS AND MORAL.
BY
PHILLIS WHEATLEY,
NEGRO SERVANT to Mr. JOHN WHEATLEY,
of BOSTON, in NEW ENGLAND.
LONDON:

Poetess Phillis Wheatley

CORBIS

Today, the fact that a famous black person did not grow up in poverty is usually treated as a kind of footnote, except in full-length biographies. Yet just as Copernican astronomers' conviction that the earth was the center of the universe blinded them to the import of the countless "eccentricities" in the movements of many stars, the "racism forever" paradigm obscures for us how very many black greats grew up nurtured by the black worlds-within-a-world created with meat-and-potatoes initiative and tenacity. Thurgood Marshall did not just "grow up in Baltimore," blessed from above by preternatural good fortune: he went to the sterling Frederick Douglass High. Gwendolyn Brooks was not just "from Southside Chicago": she was a product of the vibrant black community I have described, nurtured by Bronzeville's literary ferment, and first published in the *Defender*. For these and countless other bright lights, it took a village, indeed—thriving villages of financially stable "New Negroes," looking forward rather than backward, embracing membership in this nation.

Armed with a revived knowledge of this side of the story, we can recast our understanding of black heroes born in less fortunate circumstances, as well. The leftist skepticism of the power of individual agency constrains black America within the falsehood that history is destiny. But every time we are told that "slavery refuses to fade" (Derrick Bell), that "racism continues as an ideology and a material force within the U.S., providing blacks with no ladder that reaches the top" (Robert Chrisman and Ernest Allen Jr.), or that "slavery has hulled empty a whole race of people with inter-generational efficiency" (Randall Robinson), we are helpless to make sense of the hundreds of blacks who rose from slavery or poverty to transform the world.

For example, when Frederick Douglass escaped slavery on the Underground Railroad, history was no more destiny than it was for the ex-slaves and children of slaves who built Bronzeville. Hardly "hulled empty," Douglass became one of the nineteenth century's most influential theorists of abolitionism and women's suffrage. Booker T. Washington was also born a slave, worked in mines and as a houseboy after Emancipation, and arrived at the new Hampton black college broke and dirty. No "ladder that reaches the top" was in evidence; the year after Washington graduated, the party of Lincoln traded off Reconstruction for the instatement of Rutherford B. Hayes. But Washington adopted the teachings of Hampton's white principal on the worth of manual labor and efficiency and passed them on to thousands of black students as president of Tuskegee Institute. Not just black stories, these are also *American* stories, in that whites played crucial roles in determining for the better the life paths of both men, as was true for countless other black figures.

To dismiss these stories merely as lightning striking echoes the views of those whites who insisted during Douglass's and Washington's lifetimes that black people were congenitally incapable of anything but the lowliest achievements. Quite simply: we cannot claim that we are a strong people and insist at the same time that none but a handful of us can be expected to thrive under anything but ideal conditions.

The idea that chronicling the fate of the underclass is more important than stories of slaves rising to fame and fortune presumes that black Americans will somehow take inspiration from failure. But how can we? Instead we must focus on those who made the best of the worst, and relinquish the notion that we are the world's only people whose evolution is Lamarckian rather than Darwinian.

Yet the notion that a useful black history will inspire us to become *American* will discomfit many blacks. For us, blackness trumps Americanness; it often takes a certain adjustment for a black person to get used to Europeans processing us as "Americans" more than as "black," since this is *not* how we process ourselves. Moreover, integration has become a dirty word, from fear that it signals the disappearance of black culture. The new black history must attend to this fear.

The black contribution to American music is a perfect antidote, in its demonstration that while blacks will necessarily become more "white" in an America where interracial harmony reigns, whites in the meantime have already become "blacker." The music that all Americans cherish, sing, and dance to today would not exist if Africans had not been brought to this country.

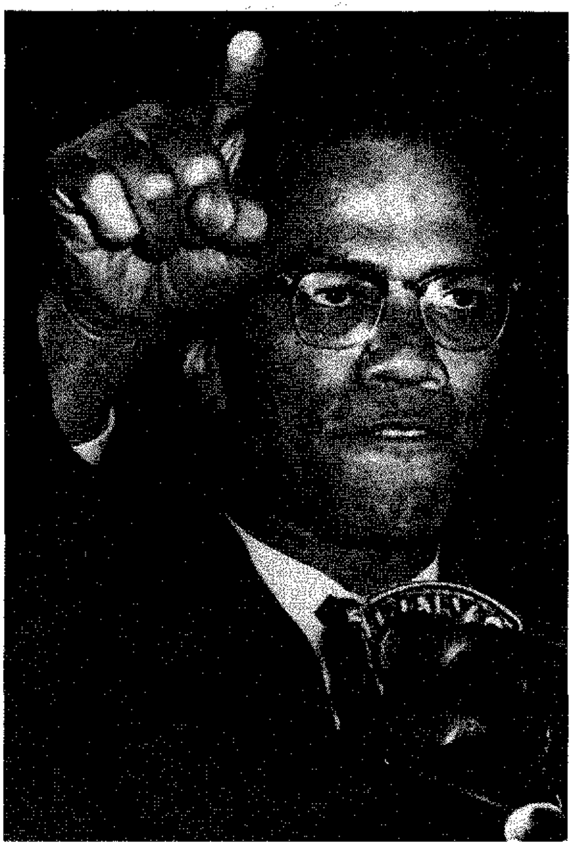
Itinerant black pianists in the South forged ragtime, with its devilishly infectious syncopation, by imposing African-derived rhythms upon European march forms, and when they brought it north in the 1890s, it took the nation by storm, saturating mainstream popular music. Irving Berlin's "Alexander's Ragtime Band" is a monument of America's first crossover music. Before the 1890s, the United States had no music this catchy: all the popular tunes Abraham Lincoln knew consisted of marches, jigs, and waltzes. Ragtime evolved into jazz, taken up by whites as swing, and later fused with white folk music to become rock and roll—the direct progenitor of all the contemporary popular music now an American trademark. Meanwhile, the blues singing style that the slaves developed became the standard idiom of "white" singing in America.

Our history must make clear that without African slaves, there would have been no George Gershwin or Richard Rodgers to forge the American musical theater tradition; no swing sound of Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw, sung to by Frank Sinatra; no Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, or Tori Amos; no white people jamming or feeling the groove.

> **"For a century, American blacks created communities of achievement that nourished solid citizens."**

Many blacks feel keenly that whites should not be let off the hook for the legacies of the racist past, but this impulse, however eminently reasonable, mustn't lock us into a frozen hostility that can't take yes for an answer. And so our history must acknowledge that America has always had a contingent of whites fighting for black dignity.

We mustn't forget that as far back as the late 1700s, the Quakers argued vigorously for the abolition of slavery and invited blacks into their churches, and that starting in the 1830s, William Lloyd Garrison and other white abolitionists often put their lives in danger arguing against slavery, in the sincere belief that it was incompatible with both Christian teachings and the Constitution's appeal to the rights of man. There is nothing of the canny operator in Garrison's call in the first issue of *The Liberator* that "I am in earnest—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD." Equally sincere was Brooklyn's Henry Ward Beecher, perhaps the nation's most popular preacher, who urged defiance of the Fugitive Slave Act (and, after the Civil War, helped spark the fame of Fisk College's Jubilee Singers by arranging performances for them across the East). After we hear the numbers of slaves whites wrested from Africa, we must hear that many northern states abolished slavery in the late eighteenth century, that in 1837 Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio were together home to 633 abolitionist societies,



BETTMAN/CORBIS (2)

A focus on white racists, like Birmingham police chief Bull Connor (top), has impelled today's black young people to take their greatest inspiration from such oppositional rebels as Malcolm X (bottom), instead of those who joined the mainstream.

and that the following year the American Anti-Slavery Society had 250,000 members.

And the abolitionist imperative was strong enough to help motivate the Civil War. Yes, many northerners' support of it stemmed from a pragmatic wariness of economic competition from the South and even a distaste for the increase in the black population that extending slavery into new territories would entail; but the Republican party was founded in equal measure out of a sense that human beings must not be in bondage. And again, though after the war Republicans eventually let Reconstruction slide when issues of power and money came to the fore, they would not even have begun to try to usher black men into high positions across America had their original opposition to slavery been purely self-interested.

Nor must we allow the impression that white indignation over racial injustice stopped with people frozen in daguerreotypes. The following simple fact ought to appear in any black history text: the NAACP was founded by white people (at the founding of the organization, Du Bois, who was appointed editor of *The Crisis*, was nervously waiting to hear just how he would be included). One searches in vain for any indication that founding white NAACP stalwarts like William English Walling, Joel Springarn, and Mary White Ovington were motivated by anything but a human revulsion at how blacks were treated in their time. Black people growing up since the 1960s have seen a civil rights movement largely dominated by various stripes of black radical. One thing that will help blacks develop a sense of membership in the national fabric is the knowledge that a passionate devotion to helping blacks has been one variation on whiteness—a minority one, but vital—since the very beginning of our republic. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was further proof, passed by the very white government so many now consider black people's implacable enemy.

Finally, black historiography must make clear that the desolation of today's inner cities was the unintended creation of yet more humanitarian attempts by whites to improve the fortunes of blacks. The leading assumption is that inner-city neighborhoods went to ruin because racist whites fled to the suburbs, and workplaces followed them. But this explanation does not hold up. Why would white flight devastate blacks, when, only a few decades earlier, blacks had built up their own cities-within-cities? Why didn't blacks simply move where the work was, when just decades before millions had migrated north to find decently paying jobs? Why did blacks not take the jobs that remained—jobs that immigrants (many often black) easily find—when, a few decades before, blacks were clamoring for any available work as soon as they got to a Bronzeville or a Harlem? And if the problem was, as often thought, that middle-class blacks moved away and deprived the poor of role models, then why did the Lower East Side not sink into anarchy as successful Jews moved uptown?

These are not rhetorical questions; they have a simple answer. In the mid-1960s, white liberals expanded a welfare program that began under the New Deal as a safety net for widows into what we would today call "reparations" for blacks. Under an erroneous assumption that "the system" offered poor blacks no path to advancement, whites created bureaucracies to pay unmarried black mothers to have children and spend their lives on the dole. This was why suddenly the old black business districts became beside the point, why so many blacks stayed put instead of following the jobs, and why, suddenly, starting from the bottom became "unfair," rather than the way life works in a capitalist society.

Once urban blacks learned from white liberal culture that the essence of the Real Black Man is a sense of inner rebellion against the Man, rendering responsibility an option rather than a given, the stage was set for the demise of inner-city America. Solid black communities with rich historical roots turned into dysfunctional slums, under the pressure of a new ideology supported by whites—*who believed that they were making up for the wrongs of the past*. Today, whites unaware of the harm their "compassion" has done to blacks make up a large and influential segment of America's elite, fiercely attached to what they honestly believe is their commitment to helping black people.

However mistaken, they hardly confirm the Afrocentrist depiction of all whites as malevolent "Ice People" set on doing black people in. And they certainly give no confirmation to the belief that white *racism* created today's inner-city slums, a belief that leads so many young blacks to reject the mainstream and identify black authenticity with the street.

Forty years have shown that nothing constructive can come from accounts like Jawanza Kunjufu's *Lessons from History: A Celebration in Blackness*, which "celebrates" us as "Africans" who were the first humans to develop writing and worship a single God (all untrue). Kunjufu gives us a pageant of black American "greats" (who he claims invented the stove, the refrigerator, soap, ink, shampoo, and the third rail), a running indictment of whites, and an ominous piece of advice that "racial unity is more important than community differences." No—the last thing a race brought here in chains needs is history books riddled with untruths that teach black children that they live in hell and should avoid forming their own opinions.

Even the few more sober and detailed sources, such as John Hope Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom*, don't do what's needed. It is ultimately concerned more with setbacks than victory, leaving the uninformed reader with only the most abstract hope for a better future. Neither Bronzeville nor Dunbar High appears in the index. Booker T. Washington is damned with faint praise. The emergence of inner-city wastelands is blithely traced to white flight. Welfare and affirmative action each get a single passing mention, and blacks' contributions to the performing arts get about three pages out of 500.

Obviously, we cannot rely on the black radical left to write the new black history. More progressive black thinkers have a new responsibility: to compose accessible black history books to get black America back on the track that the early civil rights movement set us on. We need black history textbooks that celebrate how blacks have made the most of their situation in America over the past 400 years. Their message should be: "Here's how"—referring to the horrors of the past as a background to highlight the human resilience that blacks have displayed in the face of these grievous obstacles.

Just at this moment, black America needs to take a long look backward—but above all, at the things that will give us the strength to face forward for good. ■

What *Really* Happened in Cincinnati

Everyone says that the riots were a protest against racism and oppression. Far from it.

MIKE SIMONS/NEWSMAKERS

April 11, 2001: as the riots get under way, a fire burns in Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, a ghetto area thick with social service agencies of every description.

Heather Mac Donald

In April, when riots erupted in Cincinnati, the national media let out a glad cry: Black rage, that hottest of political commodities, was back!

The subsequent post-riot drill, perfected over the last four decades, unfolded without flaw: instant discovery of the riot's "root causes"; half-hearted condemnation of the violence, followed immediately by its enthusiastic embrace as a "wake-up call" to America; warnings of future outbreaks if the "wake-up call" is ignored; and hurried formation of task forces promising rapid aid for Cincinnati's inner city.

"Riot ideology"—historian Fred Siegel's caustic phrase for the belief that black rioting is a justified answer to white racism—is alive and well in twenty-first-century America. Riots may be relatively rare, but the thinking that rationalizes them is not. It pervades the country's response to underclass problems and to race issues generally. The Cincinnati riots and their aftermath offer a peerless example of all that is wrong with this conventional approach to race. But in Cincinnati, too, if you look, are the clearest possible guideposts for how to get race issues right.

A fatal police shooting of an unarmed teenager, Timothy Thomas, triggered the riots. After 2 AM on Saturday, April 7, Thomas spotted two Cincinnati police officers and started running. Wanted on 14 warrants for traffic offenses and for evading arrest, Thomas led the policemen on a chase through the narrow alleys of Cincinnati's most drug-infested and violent neighborhood, Over-the-Rhine. The area's Italianate walk-ups, home in the late nineteenth century to one of America's most culturally rich and densely populated German-American communities, today often are either abandoned or given over to methadone clinics, drop-in centers, or Section 8 public housing.

Officer Steve Roach, hearing a radio alert about a fleeing suspect with 14 warrants, joined the pursuit and came abruptly face-to-face with the 19-year-old in a dark alley. When Thomas appeared to reach for his waistband, Roach shot him once in the chest. Three days later, Over-the-Rhine would be burning.

Cincinnati's riots hardly constituted a spontaneous outcry against injustice. A demagogic campaign against the police, of the kind common in American cities today, had already heated black residents almost to the boiling point. "Thirteen black men!"—a tally of the suspects killed by the Cincinnati police since 1995—was the rallying cry of protesters in the City Council chambers last fall. Thomas's shooting (added to a January shoot-out death) brought the total to 15, and black politicians duly updated their cry to "Fifteen black men," in effect charging that Cincinnati's cops were indiscriminately mowing down black citizens. With robotic predictability, every national news account of the riots repeated the cry, to demonstrate Cincinnati's racism.

In fact, the list of the 15 police victims shows the depraved nature not of Cincinnati's cops but of its criminals. Harvey Price, who heads the roster, axed his girlfriend's 15-year-old daughter to death in 1995, then held a SWAT team at bay for four hours with a steak knife, despite being maced and hit with a stun gun. When he lunged at an officer with the knife, the cop shot him. Jermaine Lowe, a parole violator wanted for armed robbery, fled in a stolen car at the sight of a police cruiser, crashed into another car, then unloaded his handgun at the pursuing officers. Alfred Pope robbed, pistol-whipped, and most likely fired at three people in an apartment hallway, just the latest assault by the vicious 23-year-old, who had already racked up 18 felony charges and five convictions. He then aimed his handgun at close range at the pursuing officers, and they shot him dead in return.

To call such lowlifes martyrs to police brutality is a stretch. Besides the Thomas shooting, only three of the 15 cases raise serious questions about officer misjudgment and excessive force. The notion that race was the controlling element in the 15 deaths is even more absurd.

But it is perfectly in keeping with Cincinnati's racialized politics. Advocates of the city's status quo, whether opposing competitive bidding for city services or blocking the investigation of low-income housing fraud, can bring the City Council to its knees by playing the race card. For the last two years, black nationalists calling themselves the Special Forces have turned up regularly in the delicately carved council chambers of Cincinnati's Romanesque City Hall to spew anti-white and anti-Semitic diatribes. Two days after the Thomas shooting, on Monday, April 9, they were back, accompanied by hundreds of angry black residents, by Timothy Thomas's mother, and by her attorney Kenneth Lawson—Cincinnati's answer to Johnnie Cochran.

The Council meeting instantly spun out of control. Backed by constant screaming from the crowd, lawyer Lawson and another racial activist, the Reverend Damon Lynch III, masterfully inflamed the crowd's anger by suggesting that city officials were

Seventy-two percent of rioters indicted so far have adult criminal histories.

willfully withholding information about the Thomas shooting. Lawson, and doubtless Lynch, too, knew full well that disclosing Officer Roach's testimony after the shooting would jeopardize the investigation and possible prosecution of the case, yet both threatened to hold every chamber occupant hostage until Roach's testimony was released. Some of the Council Democrats seconded the threats. Three chaotic hours later, Lawson and Lynch grudgingly agreed to disband, Lynch demanding that the police chief "call off the dogs [i.e., officers] outside."

The crowd left City Hall and, swelling to over 1,000 along the way, headed toward the boxy, low-slung police headquarters. Protesters screamed at the officers protecting the station and snapped photos of them, promising lethal revenge for the 15 black "murders." Someone threw a rock that shattered the station's front door; others pulled the flag from its pole and hung it upside down; police horses were hit; officers were injured by flying glass—but the order was: "let them vent." The lieutenant in charge even gave a protester a bullhorn in the hope of calming the crowd. It didn't work.

Finally, at 1 AM, police started arresting those who were hurling rocks and bottles at the station house. Too late: the violence had begun. Over the next three days, crowds would rampage through Cincinnati's poorest neighborhoods, beating white motorists, burning property, breaking hundreds of store windows, and making off with the appliances, furniture, clothing, and booze within. Gunmen fired thousands of shots, many at officers. The police chief begged black clergy for help in restoring calm but got little response.

Though the police were outmatched and overworked, Democratic mayor Charles Luken refused to take additional measures against the violence. Then on Thursday, a bullet hit a cop, grazing off his belt buckle. That afternoon, Luken imposed an 8 PM curfew and announced a state of emergency.

By then, the riot ideologues were in full cry. The NAACP's Kweisi Mfume flew in to declare Cincinnati the "belly of the whale" of police violence against young black men. Al Sharpton called for federal oversight not just of Cincinnati's but of the nation's police. *Time* magazine named Cincinnati a "model of racial injustice." The *New York Times* found pervasive economic discrimination against the city's blacks. White gentrifiers, pronounced *The New Republic*, lay behind the riots. The *Los Angeles Times* and *ABC This Week* noted how salutary the violence had been.

Local leaders scrambled to contain the public-relations fiasco and to show their concern for black anger. The City Council hurriedly voted to submit a pending racial-profiling lawsuit to costly "mediation," rather than contest it, even though none of the suit's allegations had been shown to be credible. Mayor Luken invited in the Justice Department to investigate the police division, which could result in federal oversight of the kind that busts municipal budgets. But the city's main riot response was to form Community Action Now (CAN), a three-man panel dedicated to racial reconciliation through, as its members and promotional materials insist, action, action, and more action. Its three co-chairs are Ross Love, an ex–Procter & Gamble vice president who now heads a black radio empire; Tom Cody, an executive vice president of Federated Department Stores; and the Reverend Damon Lynch, the activist who calls the police "dogs."

At CAN's inception, Ross Love, the official spokesman, announced five task forces to "address the root causes of the recent unrest." The groups, manned by local civil rights figures, business leaders, and poverty advocates, would address "education and youth development, economic inclusion, police and the justice system, housing and neighborhood development, and image and media." But "root causes" have a way of proliferating: soon, Love created a sixth task force to look at "health care and human services." And as a harbinger of its future largesse, CAN then hired a former black city manager at $1,400 a day as "special counsel."

With the formation of CAN, and the media agitation that preceded it, we are ready to test the central tenets of riot ideology. In place of "riots," any other element of underclass behavior, such as crime, can be substituted—the rationalizations are identical.

Start with the contention that riots are a response to white racism, since this is the mother of all "root cause" arguments, first popularized by the Kerner Commission Report on the 1960s riots. Ross Love gives this argument an economic spin: racially based "economic exclusion" is his mantra for explaining why blacks rioted in his city. The *New York Times* jumped on the "economic exclusion" bandwagon as well, claiming that Cincinnati has long "frustrated" blacks' justified demands for a "share of prosperity."

To test that hypothesis, walk around Cincinnati's poorest areas, from the river basin, spanned by John A. Roebling's first, beautiful suspension bridge, up to the city's seven surrounding green hills, which in Cincinnati's nineteenth-century heyday compressed its population into a greater density than anywhere but Manhattan. You will see knots of young men in their teens and twenties milling about on almost every street corner, towels draped over their heads, their shorts hanging far below their underwear. Heat has driven some out of their apartments, but many others are there to peddle drugs hidden in crevices in the old brick buildings. I approached a group of boys leaning against a tiny convenience store on a steep intersection called the Five Corners. One boy's T-shirt read: NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE, THESE OUR STREETS, F—K THE POLICE, 1981–2001—presumably Timothy Thomas's dates. I introduced myself and asked if they'd answer a few questions. "Hell, no!" In a blink of an eye, all but one of the boys had disappeared across the street and into a parking lot or down the steep incline.

Inside the tiny, dark store, a fortyish Jordanian with a mustache and a receding hairline stands squeezed behind the register. He will only give his name as "Mike." "We call the police five to ten times a day," he says quietly. "They drive through and tell them to move." What are they selling? He casts his eyes down. "I don't know; I don't want to talk about it."

At least Mike's store has not been shot at. Under the shredded red awning of Johnnie's Supermarket in the Walnut Hills neighborhood, spider-web cracks radiate across the window from a bullet hole. The bullet's target—a large red sign prohibiting loitering and giving the police the authority to come onto the premises at any time—is still visible under the cracked window. Until recently, up to 50 young men stood in front of Johnnie's, hawking drugs and extorting money from the market's customers. They are mostly gone now, thanks to an undercover operation that netted 19 indictments. But in front of an abandoned building kitty-corner from Johnnie's, ten young men in white T-shirts shift back and forth.

> **"The notion that this friendly town denies employment to job-ready black men because of their color is ridiculous."**

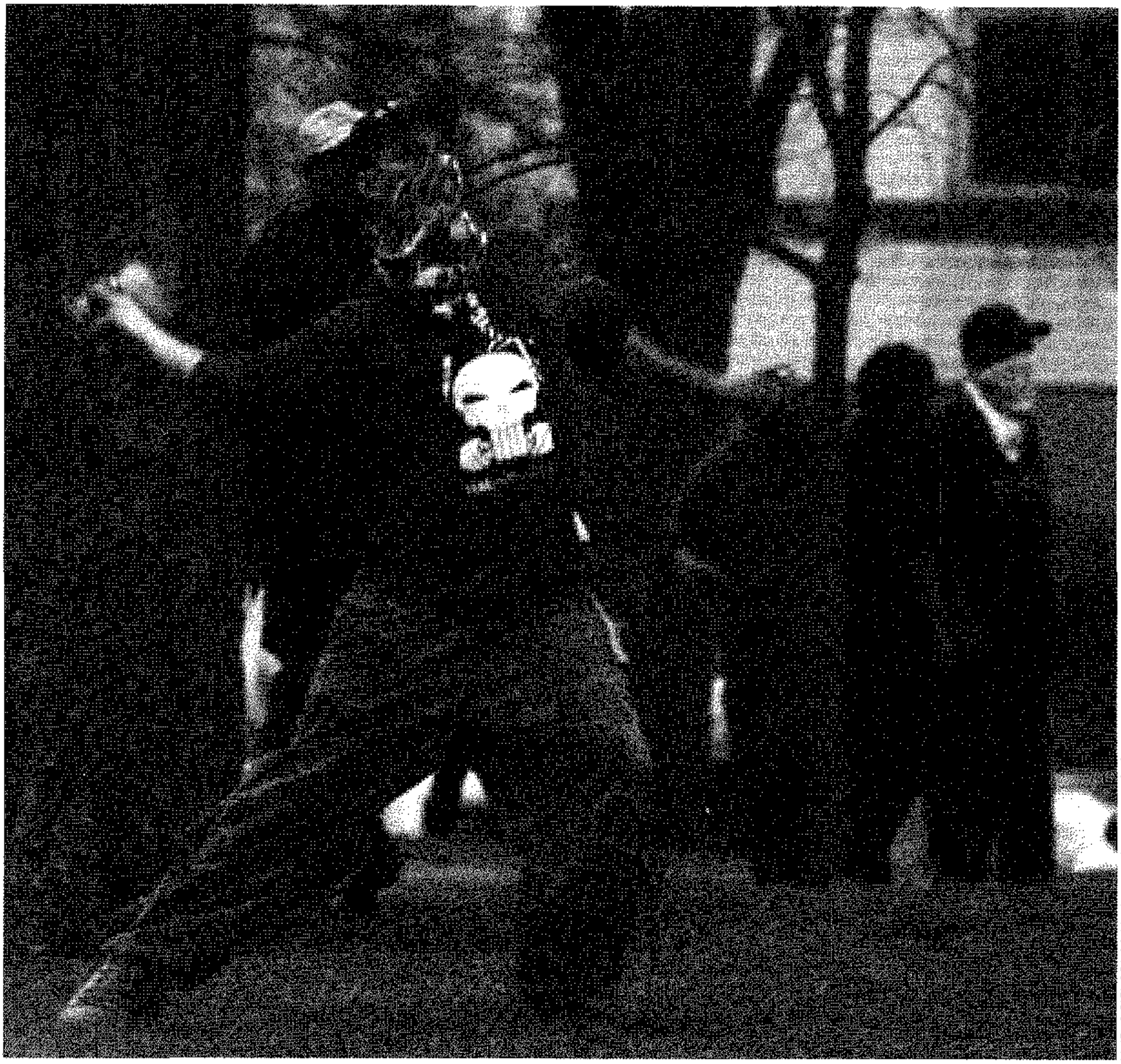
Now, remember the "economic exclusion" argument: Cincinnati's racist power structure is excluding hordes of qualified young black men. Well, here the men are, and it is ludicrous to attribute their joblessness to corporate bigotry, rather than to their own unemployability. The high school dropout rate in Cincinnati is between 60 and 70 percent. And will the young men across from Johnnie's show up every day to work on time and respond appropriately to authority? Has any of them even applied for a job and been turned down? Last summer, King's Island, an amusement park north of the city, had to import 1,000 young Eastern Europeans for summer jobs, because it could find no local youths to apply. Yet the well-intentioned CEO of Procter & Gamble, Cincinnati's beloved corporate titan, has called, in good riot-ideologue fashion, for the urgent creation of 2,500 government- and privately subsidized summer jobs to forestall another rampage.

I asked Ross Love what evidence he had for "economic exclusion" in Cincinnati. "You have to look at the end result," he said. "The unemployment rate is four times higher for blacks than for whites; for 18- to 30-year-olds, it is an incredible 50 percent." But "looking at the end result" is the hallmark of bogus civil rights analysis, designed to shift attention from individual deficits onto the resultant disparate outcomes, which are then attributed to racism. We can argue about whether society is, in some structural way, *still* somehow to blame for Cincinnati's idle, functionally illiterate young dealers, but let's not brand employers as racist.

Cincinnati's African immigrants have a different perspective from CAN on "economic exclusion." "We experience more resentment from African-Americans than from whites," says cabdriver Mor Thiam. "They don't want to see us in business. 'Man, go back to Africa! You come here and take our monies,' they say." Amy, a Senegalese cabdriver in a robin's-egg-blue ruffled cotton dress, has been teaching herself about riot ideology by listening to Ross Love's local radio station, WDBZ, "The Buzz." "They are angry on that station!" she exclaims. "A lot of them don't work; they go to your taxi, try to steal your money. When I came here, I earned $4.25 an hour, but I worked. I liked it. I paid my bills; I sent money home. If you want to get a job, you get a job. We see a lot of opportunity here."

The notion that this friendly, well-meaning town is denying employment to job-ready black men because of the color of their skin is ridiculous. To the contrary, Cincinnati's biggest corporations have long practiced affirmative action. Expect CAN's "economic inclusion" task force to recommend even more quotas, however, rather than honestly to address why young blacks are not working.

Those who attribute riots to racism blame racist police no less than racist employers. The riot apologists' most incessant indictment against the



BRUCE CRIPPEN/CINCINNATI POST/CORBIS SYGMA

A rioter lobs a tear-gas canister back toward the police.

Cincinnati Police Division: the Cincinnati 15. But besides ignoring the defensive nature of almost all the killings, the apologists never mention that one of the 15 victims dragged an officer—a black officer—to his death in a car; or that, as of May 17, all four of the most recent shootings by police (two lethal) involved black officers; or that, with a death toll of three officers over the last four years, a Cincinnati cop is 27 times more likely to die at the hands of a black man than a black man is to die at the hands of the Cincinnati police.

Little evidence supports the claim that the Cincinnati Police Division is an institution out of control. In 1999, Cincinnati officers had fewer fatal shootings per officer than the San Diego Police Department, constantly lauded as progressive by the liberal press. Over the last six years, the police in St. Louis, a city comparable in size to Cincinnati, killed 20 suspects, according to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, without attracting the national media's attention.

Cincinnati officers use non-lethal physical force (such as punching or kicking) about 50 times per year, or in .09 percent of all arrests: an unexceptionable rate. A *Cincinnati Enquirer* study found no racial pattern in force incidents, and as for the racial-profiling charges, Cincinnati officers ticket black and white drivers proportionately to their representation in the city's population. The department's current and previous chief are highly respected among their peers. While by no means as cutting-edge in its management techniques as the New York Police Department, the Cincinnati department appears to be easily as well managed as most.

> **“'Younger people have a hateful attitude,' laments Officer Chatman, recalling the F—K THE POLICE T-shirts.”**

Like every police force in the country the Cincinnati department struggles with police-community relations. Too many officers are sullen and defensive, say some downtown leaders. Of course, they often face a very hostile audience. "Younger people have a hateful attitude," laments Officer Dean Chatman, recalling the F—K THE POLICE T-shirts he has seen. Boys try to provoke the police into chasing them, so that they can be caught empty-handed. Passersby often accuse Chatman of being a "house nigger." "They tell me: 'You've sold out; you especially should understand,' " he says. "My response is: 'No, I don't. My brother wouldn't do what you're doing.'"

But for all the talk of Cincinnati's abysmal police-community relations, it is easy to find people who bear no animus toward the police. Typical is Galen Bailey, a 40-year-old illustrator. He figures he's been stopped 15 or 16 times for speeding (he drives very fast), and there has been a warrant out for his arrest because of unpaid traffic tickets. The only time he's felt any qualms about a police officer occurred during a traffic stop across the Ohio River in Kentucky: "I got the impression I should keep my mouth shut," he recalls.

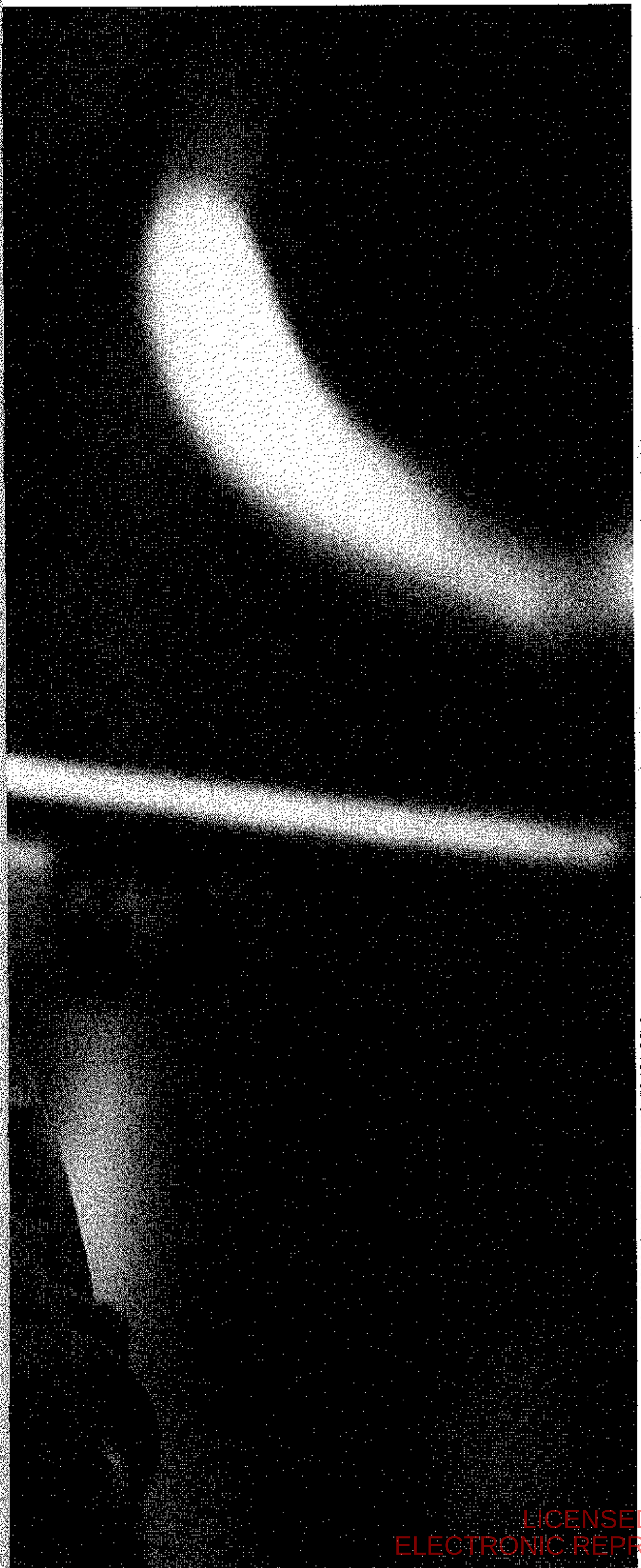
Even some of those who express animus report civil treatment. A 16-year-old in a doo-rag and low-slung pants waiting at a bus stop outside City Hall says he figures he's had three encounters with the police. Most recently, he was frisked by officers looking for car thieves. Afterward, they said: "We're sorry, we made a terrible mistake"—precisely the courtesy that police brass nationally struggle to elicit from their officers. The apology calmed him down a little, he said, "but they still had me kind of mad."

But the Cincinnati Police Division does have one very big problem: it has to fight too hard to get rid of bad apples on the force. About a decade ago, seeking to give managers more power, the department instituted binding arbitration for disciplining officers. "It was the worst thing we've ever done," says former police chief Mike Snowdon. The arbitrators almost always vote pro-union and anti-management; the division has lost all of its last ten cases. Rolando Underwood is the poster boy for the department's discipline problems. A six-foot-two, 245-pound drug dealer, Underwood was suspended three times, fired and reinstated once, and reprimanded five times for offenses ranging from incompetence to neglect of duty during his ten years on the force. In 1995, he was suspended for conduct unbecoming to an officer for a sexual imbroglio. The department finally nailed him when he negotiated an $80,000 marijuana deal with an undercover officer.

No protesters are calling for giving management more power to fight police corruption, however; instead, the activists are making the usual demands for stronger civilian oversight. And they are racializing the discipline issue. In 1995, a special commission decried the fact that blacks, 23 percent of the force, represented 44 percent of all discipline cases. But court mandates have forced Cincinnati to hire and promote by race since 1981, and of course such mandates invariably compromise quality.

Even so, the department is far from the pit of injustice that the civil rights establishment and the

What *Really* Happened in Cincinnati



JASON D. GEIL/THE NEWS RECORD/CORBIS SYGMA

national press have painted it. Does it stop and frisk more blacks than whites? You bet: because blacks commit the overwhelming preponderance of crime in Cincinnati. Bringing up that issue, however, is deemed "racially inflammatory." But it wasn't police brutality that incited the riots; it was the incessant anti-police campaign waged by local activists.

Ever since the Kerner Commission report, riot apologists have insisted that more social programs are necessary to prevent riots. The Kerner Commission called for welfare on demand, 1 million new government jobs, and extensive new job-training programs. No matter that the federal government was already spending $1.6 billion on job training in 1968, that cities with some of the most brutal riots, such as Detroit and New Haven, were particularly well-endowed with the then-400-plus federal poverty programs, or that the welfare population was already skyrocketing, despite an unprecedentedly long period of economic growth.

Cincinnati's leaders are no less impervious to reality. Since the riots, the Reverend Damon Lynch has been blaming "disinvestment" in poorer areas and demanding that poverty agencies that had been defunded because of fraud be fully refunded. Yet Over-the-Rhine, with its thick concentration of helping agencies, is already a social worker's dream.

Mayor Luken's swipe at the business community, with its faux sorrow and its faux facts, is a riot-ideology classic. "I am somewhat saddened that it takes this kind of situation to come together, [but] I'm happy that business leaders are finally engaged," he pontificated at the end of riot week. Finally engaged? Cincinnati's business community can perhaps be faulted for the dreary conventionality and naïveté of its philanthropic efforts but not for the scope of those efforts. Local corporations contribute millions to poverty agencies and civil rights groups. Fifth Third Bancorp and Procter & Gamble, for example, have been funding "economic development" in Walnut Hills, home of Johnnie's Supermarket, only to see their projects torn up by the recent riots. Loath to bear a grudge, the companies have only

This Cincinnati police officer's lethal-looking riot gun shoots rubber bullets.

"redoubled [their] commitment to . . . improve the neighborhood," according to a spokesman. Too bad they haven't decided to rethink radically what Walnut Hills and other riot targets really need.

Rioting sends a message, according to the riot ideology. Indeed, riot apologists attribute deep thoughts about injustice to vandals. An assistant professor of communication at the University of Cincinnati saw the recent riots as a campfire sing-along: "People wanted to come together and express their solidarity and frustration and outrage," he explained. David Gergen of *U.S. News & World Report* discerned concerns about global capitalism in the bonfires of Over-the-Rhine. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* was an equally creative oracle: the riots "revealed dissatisfaction in the areas of education, jobs, and economic opportunity," it editorialized.

These sympathetic spokesmen overlook one hard fact: rioters are often criminals. Seventy-two percent of the defendants indicted so far in the Cincinnati explosion have adult criminal histories. Prior

Wrong on the Facts

The New Republic's Michelle Cottle has given riot ideology a decidedly new-fangled twist: economic revitalization, not economic abandonment, in Over-the-Rhine caused the Cincinnati riots. The ingrates. Seems you just can't win.

Cottle's anti-gentrification case is easily disputable, since growth is an antidote to, not a cause of, poverty. But buried in her [illegible] cultivated case against development is something far more dangerous: a spurious revisionist history of 1990s policing that seeks to delegitimate the greatest crime drop—and the greatest boon to the law-abiding minority urban residents—in decades.

Cottle stops just short of claiming that the new businesses and few white residents trickling into Over-the-Rhine have actually displaced black residents. She [illegible] herself. In 1870, Over-the-Rhine housed 40,000; today, the same buildings contain just over 7,000 people, 80 percent fewer than in [illegible]. There's room and to spare.

The biggest problem with new urban entrepreneurship, Cottle seems to think, is that it brings in the police. Cottle claims that 1990s policing in Cincinnati, New York, and elsewhere arose from the need to make the world safe for white yuppies. If the police stopped and frisked more suspects for guns, if they enforced quality-of-life ordinances—those "aggressive enforcement techniques" she preposterously labels "police brutality"—it was solely to protect the white urban homesteaders moving into the ghettos.

This is fantasy of the purest order. Had Cottle bothered to check the facts, she would have discovered that policing in the 1990s was driven by one thing, and one thing only: the incidence of crime. There is no column in the reams of data that top brass pore over in New York's weekly Compstat meetings for neighborhood Starbucks, no column for the social class of crime victims. A Compstat session several months ago intensely grilled a Queens borough commander over the murder of a Mexican gang banger outside a seedy bar; no one asked then whether white debutantes had "discovered" the bar. The most stunning crime drops in New York occurred in places like the 33rd and 34th Precincts in Washington Heights—heart of the Dominican drug industry and a neighborhood wholly unspoiled by Martha Stewart catalogs. The NYPD created Model Blocks—its most intensive policing strategy, designed to liberate law-abiding residents from drug dealers—only in ungentrified neighborhoods: you could stand a very long time on [illegible] Avenue, a Model Block in the Bronx, without seeing a single white person—with or without a Ralph Lauren polo shirt.

The situation in Cincinnati and other cities that implemented data-driven policing is the same: Police go where the crime is, and that is almost invariably in minority communities. But unfortunately Cottle's ignorant thesis is catching on, of course. The *New York Times* promptly picked it up, as part of the liberal press's ongoing effort to discredit as racist the policing revolution of the last decade. If that effort succeeds, the long abatement of crime will end and inner-city neighborhoods will return to the reign of the drugs.

offenses include rape, aggravated robbery, aggravated burglary, assault, weapons discharge, and endangering children. The Walnut Hills riot was started by drug dealers and their clients, according to Candace Tubbs, a convicted former assistant to a Cincinnati drug lord who described to me the fun she used to have rolling in the piles of cash her boss hauled in. These rioting felons were simply wreaking *en masse* the destruction they usually wreak individually.

Many riot skeptics, including the great Edward Banfield, have questioned the logic of protesting injustice by destroying your local grocery store, or fighting police brutality by stealing microwave ovens. The riot apologists who nominate inadequate social spending as a "root cause" should wonder what "message" the Cincinnati rioters were sending when they torched poverty agencies. One group that provided financial assistance and job training, for example, lost about $50,000 from fire and theft.

> **"'Man, you hit her in the head!' one brick thrower admiringly exclaimed to his buddy."**

No one likes alarm clocks, but we all acknowledge their usefulness. So, too, with riots, according to the true believers. CAN's Ross Love told me that the "unrest" was a "wake-up call that the city needed." Kenneth Lawson, the inflammatory anti-police attorney, explained that the beatings of whites provided their recipients a lesson in what the "brothers" experience daily from the police, and that presumably the white establishment would take notice. The *Los Angeles Times* oozed: "While no one wants to say that the riots were good, there was on Friday an undeniable sense of relief that the mayhem . . . had laid bare Cincinnati's fissures. Now, perhaps, there could be progress."

Try telling Chris Schoonover how useful rioting is. Schoonover is part of a still-small movement of white residents and business owners back into Over-the-Rhine. On the first day of violence, as she was driving back to her apartment, a brick flew through the car's open window and struck her. "Man, you hit her in the head!" one brick thrower admiringly exclaimed to his buddy. At the hospital, Schoonover recognized an acquaintance among the dozens of bloodied people waiting for care: a rioter had jumped into her acquaintance's car and beaten her viciously with a brick.

Since the attack, which left five staples in her scalp, Schoonover's world has changed completely. Once exquisitely sensitive to racial political correctness, she now sees the world in black and white. For days after the attack she was terrified to return to her largely black neighborhood and university. The sight of white girls jogging alone filled her with dread that they would be attacked by a black person.

This heightened racial mistrust runs both ways. Schoonover's black colleagues at the bar where she works were clearly uncomfortable around her after the riots. "The black community had put out a call to arms: 'We need to be strong and united,' " she says. The call translated into greater separatism.

After a couple of post-riot incidents in which white friends were threatened, Schoonover has blacked out her window so people on the street won't see a white girl alone in her apartment. She recalls that, after the brick attack, "I was crying, because this was my neighborhood"—"her" neighborhood, despite the crack whores and the young men hustling drugs. Now she's not so sure.

Here is the hidden logic of race riots: supposedly a cry against racial oppression, their implicit threat to destroy the city merely guarantees full employment for race hustlers and sensitivity trainers by driving the races further apart. If whites flee Over-the-Rhine, expect plenty of breast-beating in the future from the press and civil rights advocates about Cincinnati's enduring racial segregation. No one will recall why the integrators left.

Riot apologists even deny the economic damage they cause. "No one has lost property value because

JIM CALLAWAY (2)

Responsible leaders like Tom Jones. . .

of the riots," Ross Love told me. "Property values have gone up since the 1960s riots; there's no reason to believe values are down because of last April."

"Is he crazy? What is he talking about?" sputtered Marlene Vonderhaar, an Over-the-Rhine merchant, when I told her of Love's claims. In all of May, Vonderhaar made two sales from her antique store. "My shop is dead," she pronounces. Suburban customers refuse to come downtown now; business in the area has dropped some 60 percent. Vonderhaar lost up to $50,000 in merchandise when vandals, enraged that her store was already boarded up, hurled tires and bricks against the plywood, sending mirrors and ceramics shattering to the floor.

Vonderhaar's antique store typifies the "gentrification" that some media critics blame for the riots. So what will be lost if her store and others like it fold? The new Over-the-Rhine entrepreneurs offer jobs to those local residents who have the work ethic to take advantage of them. They provide entrée to the world of work beyond Over-the-Rhine. And sometimes they may try on a very personal level to free someone from the ghetto. For several years, Vonderhaar has been struggling to save from the streets a charming homosexual youth with a crack-addicted mother. After he stole money from her, Vonderhaar gave him a second chance and tried hard to help. But when he continued to steal from her and others, she finally gave up. "He broke my heart and broke me," she says.

According to the riot ideology, the most authentic black leaders are angry black leaders, and the Reverend Damon Lynch, ever since his appointment as the city's Number One racial healer, has taken on the role with a vengeance. He drove out an annual rock festival from Over-the-Rhine by threatening boycotts and protests, and he tried to shut down one of Cincinnati's most moneymaking tourist attractions, its food festival. During a noisy sit-in at a downtown restaurant, he promised to "let people know that Cincinnati is not a place to bring your conventions or your business. Until there is justice, there will be no business as usual, no lunch as usual." (Lynch carefully refrained from defining the "justice" that would buy peace.) His choice of protest symbolism was fanciful, since no one has ever alleged that blacks cannot get service at downtown restaurants—but no more fanciful than his comparison of Cincinnati to South Africa in its "economic apartheid."

Lynch's rhetorical extremism guarantees his ongoing relevance as anointed black leader. Liberal whites need black anger to prove the persistence of racism among their unenlightened neighbors, which they alone can atone for by the *noblesse oblige* of liberal paternalism. Thus, to reinforce their own sense of moral superiority, they confer racial authenticity only on blacks like Damon Lynch, self-proclaimed angry victims of American bigotry. Lynch's ever more rash protests make a mockery of his mediator position on

Community Action Now; if he wants to continue playing firebrand, he should resign from CAN. But no one dares suggest he leave, even though his boycotts are killing the very neighborhood he purports to represent. Ross Love's support of his co-chair reflects his grasp of the underlying dialectic: "Lynch's protests increase his authority," he told me. "They give him more credibility in the eyes of the people we need at the table."

And here, in a nutshell, is the tragedy of moral leadership in black America. Love merely states received wisdom in claiming that black moral authority derives from protesting white racism, and that the alienated youth who most respond to such protests are the most authentic representatives of the black community.

“Suburban customers refuse to come downtown now; business in the area has dropped some 60 percent.”

This logic consigns to silence many, many black Americans—law-abiding citizens, who see crime, not racism, as the biggest threat in their lives. Over-the-Rhine resident Sheila Randle, for example, doesn't buy Love's and Lynch's charges. A former manager of Salvation Army stores, the 50-year-old Randle is a prisoner in her own home. Young people smoke marijuana and crack on the street outside her apartment all night; they jeer at her husband when he asks them to get off his car. Addicts have started breaking into her building's entryway. "You never know who's going to be on the landing in the morning," she says. Randle is desperate to move, but her options are limited.

What about these stories of police racism? I ask her. "I have no problem with the police; they treat me respectfully," she answers. "It's the young people who are the problem." And the thesis that the police only care about white yuppies? "The police are there to protect all the people, not just the whites," she asserts. What about societal racism generally? "I've never experienced it."

Randle wanted to support the police in their time of trouble by attending the annual police memorial this May. The anti-police demonstrators frightened her off, however—demonstrators allegedly representing her interests as an oppressed black woman. As for the claim that the Timothy Thomas shooting is a sign of police racism, Randle will have none of it. "Thomas brought it on himself," she says. "He had [warrants] on him; if he had halted like they told him to, it wouldn't have happened."

This is no fringe view. In early May, a letter writer named Loretta Blackburn wrote to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*: "If I were in pursuit of a black youth and had cornered him in an alley, after what happened to Officer Kevin Crayon [dragged to death last year by a 12-year-old joyrider], the first thing in my mind would be, 'Someone is coming out of this alley; now who do you think it will be?' We as black people need to get back to the basics and help the police to police our neighborhoods. . . . When you are in the streets hollering how unfair black people are being treated, what are you teaching your children about respect for authority? If you don't like the job that [the police] are doing, then give them a helping hand, not a shot in the back."

Damon Lynch, Al Sharpton, and Kweisi Mfume have no interest in representing the Sheila Randles and Loretta Blackburns. Far more responsible leaders who do speak for such citizens are out there, though—but the opinion elites are not about to give them a platform.

Tom Jones is standing arms akimbo just inside Johnnie's Supermarket, the beleaguered shooting target in Walnut Hills. Jones is helping Johnnie's landlord, William "Babe" Baker, put the store back on its feet, after police busted its previous Arab lessees for fencing stolen goods. A small, wiry man in his fifties, alternately serious and effervescent, Jones is arguably the most relentless advocate for public safety in Cincinnati. Since moving his copying business here in 1995 from Washington, D.C., he has been organizing his community to battle drug dealers. His efforts helped cops make 335 drug arrests in a three-month period in 1999.

Jones has one overriding principle for how to take back a community from crime: "You *must* build a working relationship with the police," he says, crouching down for emphasis. Jones taught his fellow businessmen in Avondale, the still-scarred epicenter of the 1968 riots, to call the police when crowds of dealers amassed in front of their stores. "They weren't calling!" he recalls in amazement. He organized a crime task force that won extra police patrols for the district. Unable to persuade the merchants to testify in drug cases, Jones goes on their behalf. "I stand in front of the judge and tell him: 'This community wants the dealers out,'" he says.

Jones's work with the police has won him accolades and, by a landslide, the presidency of the local community council, but he has acquired numerous enemies as well. "I may as well have KKK written on my chest," he says. Sure enough, when I asked members of the Special Forces, the black nationalists who have been disrupting the City Council, about Tom Jones, one of their "generals" contemptuously replied: "Oh, you mean Uncle Tom Jones? He was with his little group to sterilize Burnet Avenue [Avondale's main commercial strip]. We don't need police protection; it was only one block, and most of the crime is gone." Not exactly. Last year, a drug dealer fatally shot a landlord in the head on Burnet Avenue for removing the dealers from his property. Jones has been shot at as well.

Jones has only scorn for the post-riot circus. Would the civil rights activists and poverty advocates on CAN's six task forces show up if they couldn't get a cut of the resulting money? he wonders. As for that beefed-up social spending, Jones observes that "developed neighborhoods work very well without social programs, because they got up off their ass and solved their problems." If the existing programs didn't prevent the riots, Jones asks, "Why are we creating more programs?"

No less iconoclastic is the man Jones is helping at Johnnie's—real-estate owner Babe Baker. Infuriating the black establishment is a badge of honor for these men. "I'm probably the most disliked person in this city," Baker says proudly. "No, you're not; I am!" Tom Jones shoots back, laughing.

Actually, it's hard to imagine anyone disliking the tall, ebullient 84-year-old Baker, a former luminary of Cincinnati's rich musical life. In the 1950s and 1960s, Baker was the impresario for serious jazz in Cincinnati, booking such great as John Coltrane and Cannonball Adderley into his dozen nightclubs. But the 1968 riots almost bankrupted him, and now he sees the same destructive rationalizations for violence at work again. "You can't go around with a chip on your shoulder, blaming the world for your problems," he says of the rioters. "You must have a desire to do something." Black poverty will be solved only by "education and economics—putting your shoulder to the workforce"—not by protests, he insists.

Baker embodies a powerful tradition in black culture: optimistic self-help. Arriving in Cincinnati from Alabama at age 11, he started working in a produce market in Over-the-Rhine and has not stopped working since. I ask him if there was a different work ethic back then. He closes his eyes and laughs uproariously. Pausing to wipe his eyes, he answers in a voice high and scratchy with age: "Absolutely! I've done all sorts of work. When I drove cabs, the other drivers taught me to trip the meter. I refused to do it, and they wonder why I made it and they didn't." Welfare destroyed self-reliance, he says, and resulted in the time bomb of "babies having babies."

Baker believes that the free market is the best chance for reviving Over-the-Rhine and other troubled areas. He is a font of the entrepreneurial wisdom needed to do it. "You *must* pay your bills!" he says. After the 1968 riots, he obtained a loan to keep his jazz clubs open, but eventually the bank wrote it off. Five years later, he reactivated his debt and repaid it in full. Later, he wanted to buy some property for $80,000. "I went back to the bank and asked how to finance it. 'Mr. Baker, with your signature,' they said. Today, I can borrow more money than I need."

He knows how crucial knowledge is and frets that aspiring black entrepreneurs are reluctant to seek it. "You know how I learned banking?" he asks. "Someone asked me for a financial statement. I didn't know what one was. I asked: 'Will you please explain to me what that means?' All you have to do is be honest, not smart-alecky, and say to people: 'I really don't understand,' and they will help you," he says enthusiastically. And like any entrepreneur, he takes for granted the need to save and invest. "The mistakes we made?" Baker muses. "When we made a little money, we bought a Cadillac, not a house."

Don't wait for Baker to get a hearing in official Cincinnati; his views are just too radical. Most galling, he denies the charge of systemic racism. "This used to be a prejudiced city, but that's changed," he says. "Blacks are making lots of money now." The racial-profiling controversy? He's not buying it. "I'm a disciplinarian. There's no reason to get into trouble."

What a difference it would make if Jones were as lionized for suppressing the drug trade on Burnet Avenue as Damon Lynch is for organizing boycotts, or if the press gave legitimacy to people like Jones and Babe Baker instead of to Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. If the media did pay attention to the racial nonconformists, it would find a large, untapped audience, frustrated with conventional black politics but also afraid of retribution for dissent. A downtown Cincinnati business figure who would only speak anonymously told me bitterly: "The civil rights leadership is killing us; it's absolutely killing us. As white exploitation is a sin, so is black waste. We are living in an unnatural state." Illustrator Galen Bailey blames Lynch and Lawson's pre-riot rabble-rousing for the violence: "All these young kids needed was for an adult to give them permission to riot," he says in dismay.

Riot ideology in Cincinnati has had its usual effect. In the month following the riots, violent crime of all kinds rocketed up 20 percent. This is not surprising. Not only did the riot ideologists romanticize assaults and theft as a long-overdue blow for justice, but they demonized the police as hard-core racists. Arrests for quality-of-life offenses, disorderly conduct, and drug possession—the firewall against more serious crime—have plummeted since the riots, as the police keep their heads down.

The next time an urban riot hits, the best response is: do nothing. Compensate the property owners, then shut up. Scurrying around with antiracism task forces and aid packages tells young kids: this is the way to get the world to notice you, *this* is power—destruction, not staying in school, studying, and accomplishing something lawful. Even better, of course, would be to prevent the next riot before it happens by sending in police in force at the first sign of trouble.

. . . and Babe Baker don't get press attention.

But better even than this, political and business leaders who have not already sold out to the civil rights monopolists should try to break their cartel. They should find black citizens who are willing to speak about values and personal responsibility, and who embody them in their own lives. They should appear with these citizens at public meetings and put them on task forces, if task forces they must have. If they do it enough, the press will have to pay attention. And when the voice of hardworking black America becomes familiar, the riot ideology may finally lose its death grip on American politics. ■

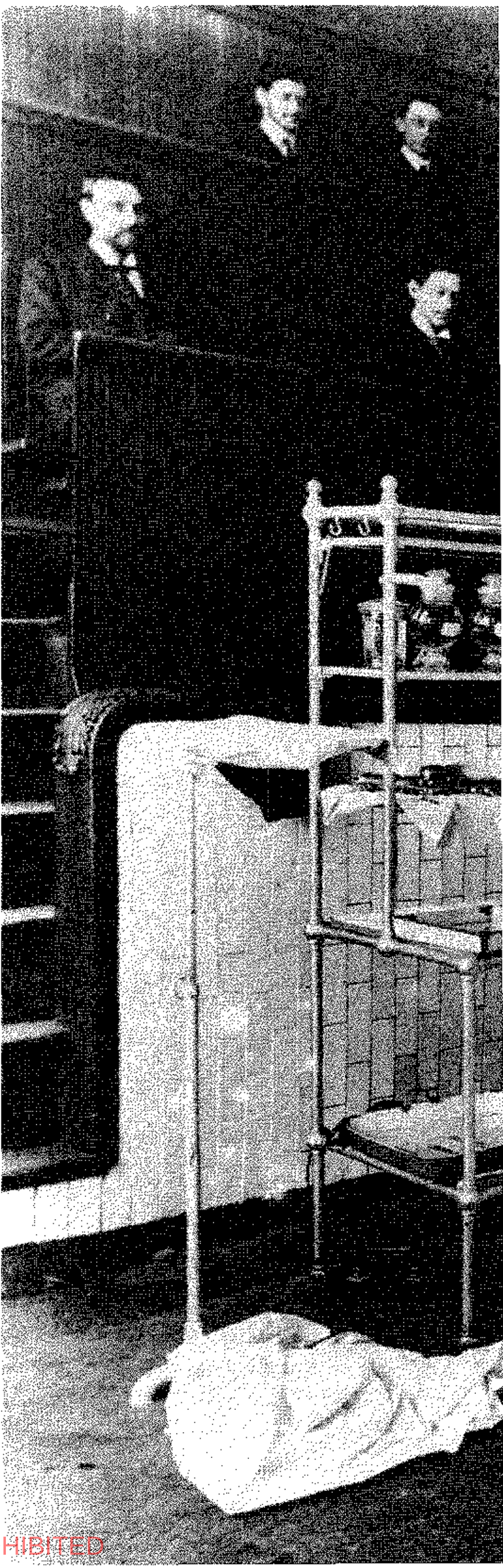
How Political Malpractice Crippled New York's Health Care

Steven Malanga

Everybody believes that New York State's health-care system, led by Gotham's famous teaching hospitals, is the best in the nation—and therefore the most expensive. Expensive, yes: and all the more so after Governor Pataki, under pressure from powerful hospital union chief Dennis Rivera, last year turned over all of New York's share of the federal tobacco settlement to the health-care system, already the most subsidized in the country. "To think that $9 billion in government spending over three years was decided by a union leader and the governor!" marvels Gary Fitzgerald, head of the Iroquois Healthcare Alliance, an association of hospitals in upstate New York. "It was unprecedented."

But the nation's best health-care system? Oh, no—not anymore. For 35 years, political rather than practical considerations have ruled the state's health-care decisions, with disastrous results. The state's leaders piled on mountains of regulations, starved successful hospitals for capital, kept inefficient but politically connected institutions alive through big subsidies, and levied special assessments and surcharges on businesses and citizens already burdened by high costs. In the process of driving up the price of health care in New York—and incidentally sending the rolls of the uninsured soaring far beyond national levels—Albany reduced to mediocrity what was once the most prestigious health-care system in the land.

After decades of meddling by politicians, union leaders and advocates—who together have shaped New York's health-care system far more than doctors have—the Empire State is ill-prepared to deal with the forces that have been transforming medicine nationwide since the mid-sixties. These pressures, from cutbacks in federal spending to the introduction of managed care, have sparked a succession of crises in New York, a



THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEGATIVE # 44016

When these medical students watched this operation at Bellevue, Gotham's teaching hospitals were tops in the U.S.

A cabal of hospitals, unions, and pols made the Empire State system's costs soar and its quality plunge.

permanent emergency that can only be solved if the state's political leaders stop treating health care like a patronage fiefdom to be financed and protected for their own political gain. Albany needs to cut billions in subsidies to dubious programs, to close poorly performing hospitals, especially those in areas that have too many hospital beds, and to end mandates designed to micro-manage the system. The stakes are high: if the state doesn't act—soon—its bloated health-care system threatens to overwhelm state and local budgets and sap New York's private-sector economy, as well.

"'Excellence of service is not dependent on utter incontinence in the spending of health dollars.'"

The trouble started with Governor Rockefeller's overenthusiastic response to President Johnson's 1965 legislation creating Medicare (designed to pay for health care for the elderly) and Medicaid, (providing coverage for the poor). Since each state could custom-tailor its own Medicaid program, Rockefeller designed the most liberal and inclusive Medicaid legislation in the country and asked the state's cities and counties to foot half the bill. The new program debuted just as New York mayor John Lindsay, with equal enthusiasm, was leading an aggressive effort to expand the city's welfare rolls, which formed the basis of Medicaid enrollment. Lindsay more than doubled public assistance rolls, ballooning the state's Medicaid program far beyond projections.

Doctors and hospitals had their own cause for enthusiasm: they billed aggressively for these patients. With government footing the cost, optional procedures became common, hospital stays lengthened, and fraud proliferated. Rockefeller had estimated New York State's Medicaid bill at $80 million in 1966, but it rose to $330 million in 1969, then $474 million by 1972, and $762 million by 1976. Adding contributions from the federal government and municipalities, the full cost of Medicaid in New York was a staggering $3 billion by 1976.

A decade after Albany decided Gotham needed 5,000 fewer hospital beds, it had more than ever.

A state commission described New York City's early efforts to cope with the fire-hose torrent of Medicaid bills as "unaccountable, uncontrollable and unmanageable." Albany didn't do much better. Overwhelmed administrators couldn't keep up, and New York's over-ambitious system ended up the last state Medicaid program in America to be computerized.

Just when Medicaid exploded onto the scene, changes began roiling the nation's private health-care system, too, as the introduction of expensive new technologies and a sharp turn from family medicine to increasing specialization began driving up costs. And New York State, with its large number of academic medical centers, was ground zero for many of the changes.

From 1960 through 1970, the number of doctors in New York State swelled by 40 percent to 23,493, a surge led by a tripling of hospital-based specialists practicing the most expensive kind of medicine in the most expensive settings. At the same time, the ranks of family practitioners decreased by half, so that by 1970 family doctors made up just 10 percent of all physicians in New York, while hospital specialists accounted for 39 percent. As a result, hospitalizations and costs shot up, especially in the New York City area, whose medical inflation rate, less than the national average in the 1950s, surged past the U.S. average in the 1960s. Premiums for Blue Cross—the nonprofit, public trust corporation that provided most of the state's private health insurance—rose by nearly 140 percent from 1960 to 1969, and then soared 43 percent in 1970 alone, thanks to rising hospital prices. Governor Rockefeller angrily denounced hospitals; the *New York Times* grumbled that doctors, unions, and hospital administrators needed to recognize that "excellence of service is not dependent on utter incontinence in the spending of health dollars."

Bedeviled by the mess he had precipitated, Rockefeller pushed through a law limiting hospital price hikes for Blue Cross and Medicaid patients. But the price controls did nothing to restrain a surging usage of hospital beds by so many specialists and by a Medicaid system so profligate and so ill-administered.

Rockefeller's successor, Hugh Carey, tried hard to contain these runaway costs, and the campaign that sank his efforts set the pattern for how politics would govern health care in New York for the next quarter-century. Carey set out to monitor the treatments that doctors were ordering for Medicaid patients, and to eliminate the surplus hospital beds—5,000 in New York City alone—that experts said were contributing to excessive hospitalizations. The cost-containment efforts worked so well that they prompted an immediate crisis in those hospitals in poorer neighborhoods that were dependent on Medicaid, like Jewish Hospital and Medical Center of Brooklyn. When Brooklyn Jewish announced in 1977 that it would have to close because of Medicaid cutbacks, hospital advocates held the state responsible. In a refrain that would soon become drearily familiar, they also argued that the hospital's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood couldn't do without the institution's 2,000 jobs—as if the health-care system were an employment program, too. The arguments ignored the region's surplus of hospital beds and the claims of well-informed critics that problems at Brooklyn Jewish stemmed more from mismanagement than Medicaid cutbacks. Still, Governor Carey gave way and approved a bailout. Other bailouts followed, and the managements of hospitals, especially in poor neighborhoods, increasingly became immune from responsibility for their problems.

As the health-care system rapidly became politicized and lost its focus on providing care at a reasonable cost, conflicting agendas emerged. Upstate Republicans and inner-city Democrats argued that hospitals must be saved; Democrats statewide complained that the system had to finance health care for the new class of permanent poor. How to achieve these goals? "Everyone was just saying, 'Let's regulate more,'" says John Rodat, a health-care policy expert with the state legislature at the time.

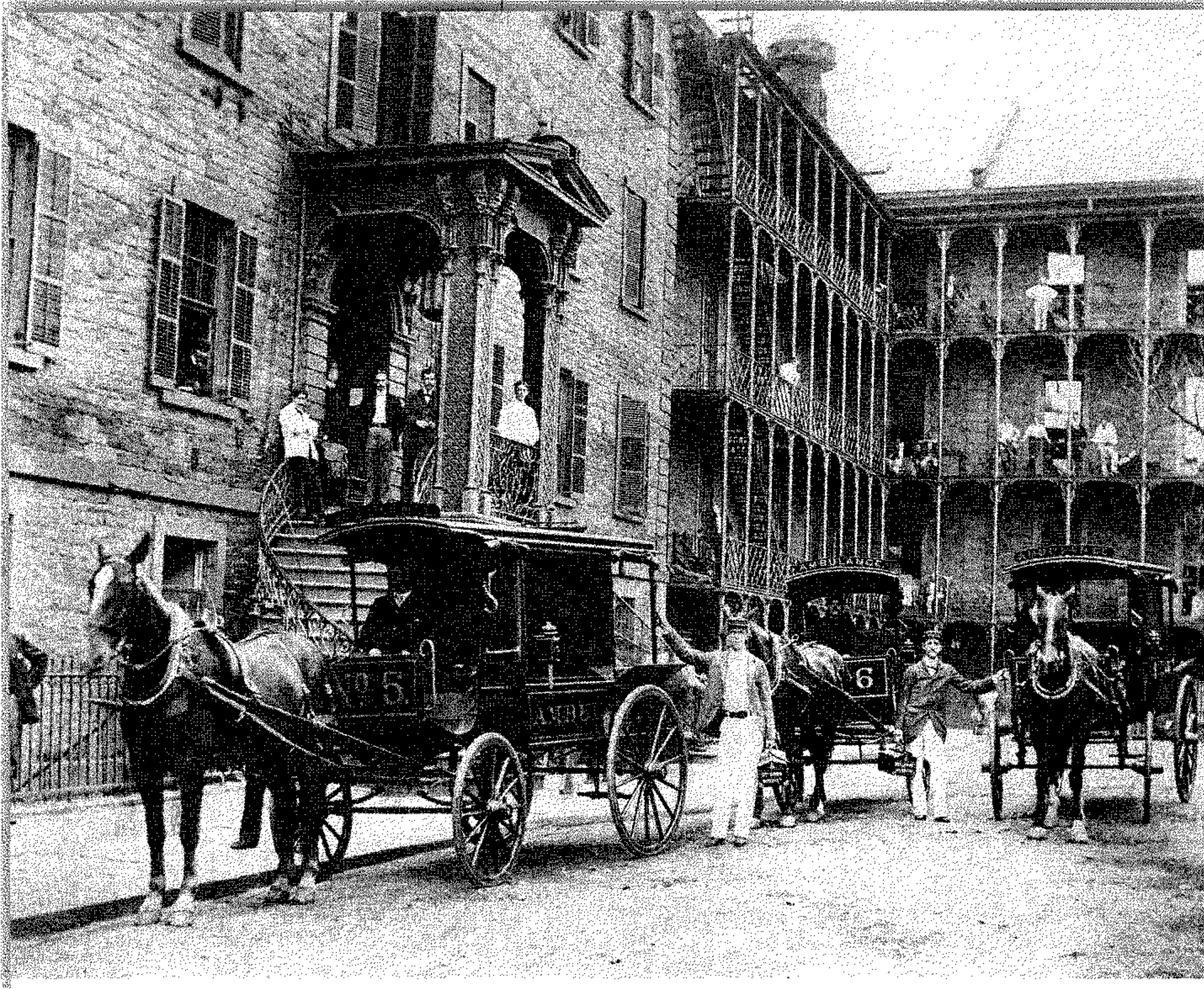
What resulted was something closer to socialized medicine than anything ever tried in the United States: a sweeping law, signed by Governor Carey in 1982, that set the price of every procedure done in every hospital, not just for Medicaid but for Blue Cross and all private insurers too. The system, dubbed New York's Prospective Hospital Reimbursement Methodology (NYPHRM), perversely allowed institutions in financial difficulty or with higher operating costs to charge more than their better-run counterparts. Ultimately, the state laid down more than 100,000 different rates.

With the state in complete control, allowing poorly run or unneeded hospitals to close became virtually impossible. In 1986, a decade after the state had vowed to cut 5,000 beds in New York City, Gotham boasted more hospital beds than ever. NYPHRM eliminated any incentives hospitals might have to operate efficiently, since the state sharply curbed the rates of well-managed institutions and continually bailed out ill-run ones.

The NYPHRM legislation also created pools of money to subsidize medical education at big academic centers, something no other state did so extensively, and the government money ultimately produced both an excess of doctors in the state and the most expensive doctor-training system in the country. To fund those pools, Albany tacked surcharges on private insurance, thereby raising the cost of one part of the system even as it was trying to restrain costs elsewhere. "There was no firewall between the politicians and the regulators, so the health-care system became like school aid in New York," says Elliott Shaw, vice president of the Business Council of New York State. "The hospitals and doctors had to be taken care of, just like the school districts."

For the next 13 years, those inside the system got taken care of at the expense of New Yorkers who paid the health-care bills. For instance, when the state faced a medical malpractice crisis in 1985, as rising jury awards led some doctors and hospitals to stop performing the riskiest procedures, Albany didn't put caps on malpractice awards but instead levied a surcharge on health-insurance policies to help doctors and hospitals pay for additional insurance.

Gradually, hospital administrators and doctors became better at manipulating this highly politi-

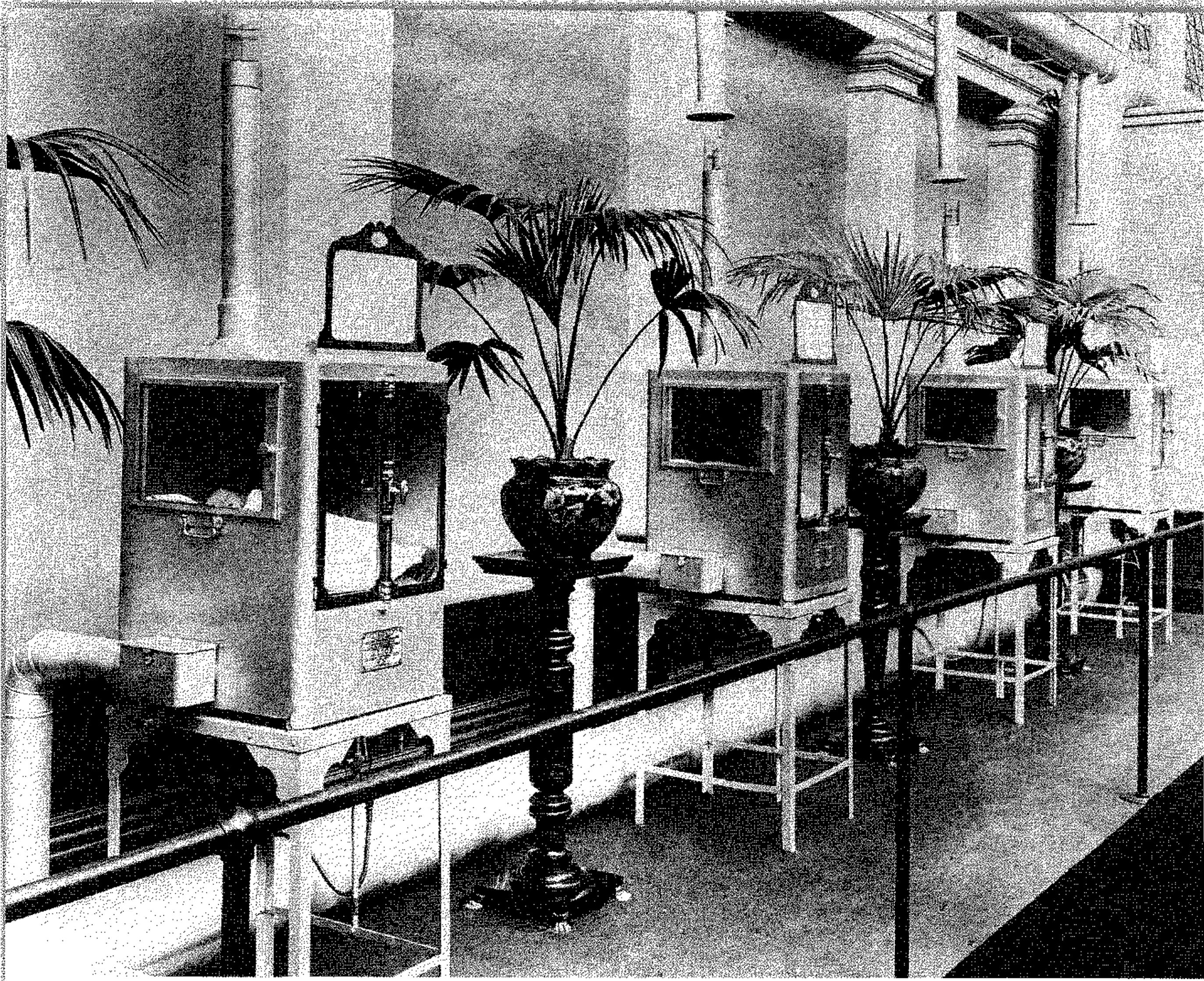


Bellevue's administration building and ambulance fleet in the 1880s

cized system than at dealing with the rapidly changing health-care world. They maneuvered around the controls the system placed on them, often with disastrous results. For instance, at first only the state's health commissioner could approve purchases of expensive equipment and hospital construction, whose cost was built in to state-regulated hospital prices. His authority quickly eroded, however, as the boards of New York hospitals—ornamented by some of Gotham's biggest movers and shakers—lobbied for pet projects.

As hospitals learned to game the system, crisis after crisis ensued. In the mid-eighties, the hospitals used an obscure federal financing program that helped institutions build new facilities—the Hospital Mortgage Insurance Program—to bankroll an unprecedented construction spree. In a state with a surplus of hospital beds, 64 New York hospitals took on more than $4 billion in debt for new construction—90 percent of all the money lent by the federal program. In Manhattan, St. Luke's-Roosevelt, Columbia-Presbyterian, and Mount Sinai borrowed around $400 million each for new buildings that together contained 2,475 unneeded beds. The first of these gleaming, expensive facilities opened just when HMOs were storming into New York in the late 1980s, driving down hospital usage. The result was a fiasco: hospital beds went unfilled; institutions struggled to meet their debt payments. Eventually, the federal government listed $1.2 billion of the loans as troubled, and the state had to let hospitals boost their rates to pay off their debt.

Little wonder that in the end NYPHRM, instead of restraining hospital costs, drove them through the roof. A hospital bill for an appendectomy at a New York City academic medical center during this era provides a perfect illustration. The actual procedure cost $2,880, but state surcharges for medical education, care for the uninsured, the malpractice insurance fund, and so on brought the total amount to $4,940.



Infants flourish in incubators at St. Luke's Hospital, alongside potted palms.

Late in 1995, business leaders, complaining that the system drove up their costs and helped push firms out of New York, joined forces with union chiefs, who grumbled that surcharges on insurance forced working-class New Yorkers to pay for elite programs like graduate medical education. Together they urged the new Pataki administration to overhaul health care radically. Health commissioner Barbara DeBuono responded with a proposal to end state price-fixing and to let insurers and hospitals negotiate rates with each other. She called for a substantial reduction of hospital subsidies. To encourage competition, she advocated rating hospitals and making pricing data available to consumers. Pataki himself called for a $1 billion cut in the state's $26 billion Medicaid bill, almost as big as the combined cost of the next two biggest state Medicaid programs, those of California and Texas. Advocates of reform applauded.

Hospitals and their unions went ballistic. Local 1199 chief Rivera, whose union represents mostly unskilled workers, predicted that the state would lose 150,000 of its 740,000 health-care jobs. More apocalyptic, the Greater New York Hospital Association warned that nearly half of the 330,000 health-care jobs in the city—constituting Gotham's biggest industry—could evaporate. An ex-head of Bellevue Hospital predicted that one-third of the city's hospitals might close.

With a credulous press printing daily scare stories of impending health-care chaos, the Pataki administration scaled back its bold plan. It junked a proposal to allow for-profit hospitals. It sweetened rate deregulation by continuing for at least three years many of its biggest subsidies, and even kicked in new money from surcharges for retraining hospital workers who might be laid off by consolidation. The Clinton administration piled on a further $1.6 billion in transition funds. Everyone agreed that after years of regulation the state's hospitals were ill-prepared for competition. "Hospitals in New York went into this new environment in much worse shape than hospitals around the country," says Dan Sisto, head of the Health Care Alliance of New York State, a hospital association.

Even so, deregulation at first seemed to spark an enormous change in hospitals as they scrambled to get ready for a competitive marketplace. A wave of local mergers took place, as institutions sought to cut costs, eliminate redundancies, and beef up their negotiating power with insurers. In New York City, New York and Columbia-Presbyterian Hospitals merged, as did Mount Sinai with New York University Medical Center, and Beth Israel with St. Luke's-Roosevelt.

> “‘In mergers, New York hospitals have taken the Noah's Ark approach: two of everything.’”

But if hospital board members were eager for the benefits of consolidation, many doctors who ruled over fiefdoms in big medical centers were not, and they quickly subverted the efficiency of most deals. The Mount Sinai–New York University merger is a case in point. Resistance from doctors aborted the hospitals' first merger attempt, and, when the deal finally went through, the institutions didn't act like one organization. They first united and then re-split their boards; the combined system has made little headway on eliminating redundant departments and virtually none on combining clinical practices. It continues, for instance, to operate two separate liver-transplant units—when most institutions don't even have one—because neither hospital wants to give way.

Virtually every major merger has followed this pattern. At New York–Presbyterian, for instance, the heads of both neurology departments retired soon after the merger, but rather than name one chief, the system appointed two and passed up a chance to consolidate the practices. "In mergers, New York hospitals have taken the Noah's Ark approach," says health-care consultant Rodat: "Two of everything."

New York's doctors have argued that too much consolidation just doesn't make sense competitively or for patient care. The former head of NYU–Mount Sinai, Dr. John F. Rowe, refused to consolidate transplant departments for fear doctors would leave the institution. And Dr. Herbert Pardes, chief executive of New York–Presbyterian, says that with employment cut by 1,100 jobs, or 8 percent, since the merger, his staff is overworked. "Today, only the sickest patients are being hospitalized," he says. "With staff cuts, we have fewer people to deal with more acute cases, and everyone is stretched thin."

The results have been only nominal cost savings. Mount Sinai–NYU saved a mere $8 million from consolidations the first year after its merger, and experts estimate that New York's biggest hospital mergers may be yielding, at best, combined savings of $30 million to $50 million a year—a far cry from the $250 million annual savings won from the well-chronicled, highly successful Boston merger of Massachusetts General Hospital with Brigham and Women's Hospital.

If doctors have found deregulation distasteful, so have many New York legislators, accustomed to having a big role in shaping health care. Unable to control prices, and disliking the new power that insurance companies now wielded, legislators began asserting their power through mandates that dictated what kinds of care private health policies had to cover. Mandates had for years been controversial: they heap costs onto the private health-insurance system. In the 1980s, for instance, a national study found that mandates that require second opinions for surgery raised premiums by 7 percent—because doctors rarely contradicted the recommendations of their colleagues.

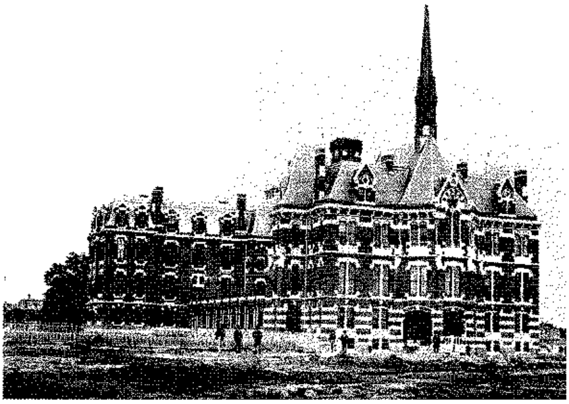
Although Albany had passed just two mandates all through the 1980s, in 1997 alone it enacted five, including one requiring that all policies cover chiropractic care. A 1999 state health-department study found that the chiropractic mandate alone added 1.5

percent to insurance premiums—a significant boost, when family coverage already averages $6,000 a year. Legislators have piled on four more mandates in the last three years, despite pleas for a moratorium from a coalition of businesses, labor unions, and associations representing cities and counties. The legislators' rationale? Explains Queens City Councilwoman Julia Harrison, when asked why she supported the chiropractors' mandate: "They go to the little leagues. They are active. They want a bill, I'm happy to help them."

With hospitals resisting cost cutting, and mandates piling up, the state's health-care system never shrank, and the anticipated savings never materialized, despite the mergers. Hospital employment statewide declined by just 2.8 percent to 322,000 positions between 1995 and 2000. Even with the decline, the state's hospitals employed more people at the end of the 1990s than at the beginning of the decade. In Gotham, supposed to bear the brunt of Medicaid cuts, jobs at private hospitals declined by just 2.2 percent, or 3,500 jobs, from 1995 through 2000, after growing by 30,100 jobs during the NYPHRM era. With hospitals so closely allied with union leader Rivera that they found it hard to shrink their workforces, so few workers lost their jobs that the money the state collected from private health-insurance premiums in 1996 to retrain fired health-care workers sat largely unused, and in 1998, Albany simply gave $148 million of it to hospitals.

Nevertheless, the state's health-care industry didn't like what little reform it had gotten, and by the late 1990s industry leaders began making plans to thwart any further reforms. Their efforts intensified when the federal government's 1997 Balanced Budget Act cut $119 billion over five years out of federal health-care programs. Soon after the federal bill, Rivera and his hospital allies began lobbying Albany to ensure that Pataki not only renewed the transitional subsidies he'd set in place in 1996 but also added money to offset federal losses.

Rivera built up a $13 million political action fund from contributions from his members and others, including the Greater New York Hospital Association. In 1999, his coalition launched the most expensive lobbying campaign in state history, featuring scare-mongering television ads that warned of an impending crisis that could close hospitals and prompt huge layoffs. Rivera hugely outspent the opponents of subsidies. "The governor never put out a counterproposal for us to defend, so it was difficult to raise money for a campaign," explains one business lobbyist.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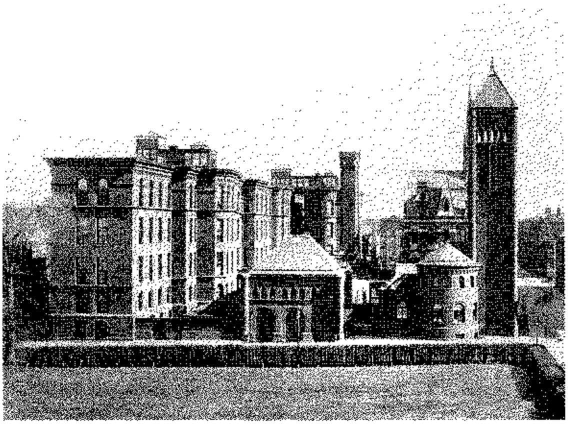
Presbyterian Hospital in the 1870s . . .

The campaign cemented Rivera's reputation as one of Albany's most influential players and derailed any hope of reform. Pataki's staff invited Rivera directly into negotiations on a new bill, which not only maintained the subsidies previously set in place but also added $1.3 billion in state tobacco-settlement money and threw in another $1.4 billion from a new tax on cigarettes. Most of the additional money would go to expand the richest Medicaid system in the country, an allocation that Rivera and the city's hospitals pushed at the expense of institutions where Medicaid matters less. The deal starkly underscored how much the city's private hospitals had come to depend on Medicaid, which today accounts for a third of their total billing, turning what was once the country's most revered hospital system increasingly into a ward of the state's social services apparatus.

Perversely, the tiny piece of the new legislation designed to help small businesses provide health-care coverage only affected firms that had not previously offered health insurance. "Some of my employees actually asked me to drop our company coverage for a year so that they could join the state



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. . . and as enlarged in 1889 on Madison and 70th

program, because it's so much more generous than the coverage I can afford to offer," says Roger Hannay, owner of Hannay Reels, a small manufacturer in Westerlo, New York.

But Rivera, who refused requests to speak with *City Journal*, made out like a bandit. Of the $150 million in grants to retraining programs that the legislation included (even though the hospitals and unions had never needed most of the previous money allocated for retraining), more than half of all the funds disbursed earlier this year went to local 1199's training programs—just in case. And the new legislation eliminated programs to rate hospitals on the quality of their care, an accountability initiative Rivera and the hospitals hotly opposed. "You have to wonder if we can ever discuss quality health care in a highly political environment like this," says Al Charbonneau, the former head of Genesee Hospital in Rochester, who chaired a committee that created a model hospital report card for the state health department, only to see the idea die in 1999.

In return for this bounty, the normally Democratic Rivera stayed neutral in the 2000 elections, when an embattled Pataki feared that his Republicans could lose their hold on the State Senate. Doubtless Pataki will also seek support from Rivera—or at least neutrality—in the 2002 gubernatorial race. But Rivera is sure to extract more for that—and indeed, in March he asked the state for $100 million in new money for nursing homes, whose workers 1199 also represents.

Exactly how much damage have Pataki's deals with Rivera done to the state's health-care system? Although some rates declined after the state stopped setting prices, a recent study by the Data Advantage consulting group found that New York's hospitals collectively ring up the second-highest average bills of any state in the nation—$6,204 per hospitalization, or 30 percent above the national mean, even after adjusting for the severity of cases New York hospitals treat. Meanwhile, the state spent $7.4 billion in 1999 on hospitalized Medicaid patients, or $4,180 per patient, compared with $9.2 billion, or just $2,377 per patient, in Texas and California combined.

As costs have soared, the ranks of the uninsured have swelled from 13.5 percent of the state's population in 1990 to 18.5 percent by decade's end. By 2000, more than 3 million residents were without coverage—nearly 40 percent of them employed. New York State's health-care-cost explosion has left many individuals unable to afford insurance, and it has made businesses, especially small ones, unable to offer it. The typical family policy offered by small businesses in New York these days costs between $5,000 and $6,000 per year, depending on deductibles. No wonder that the state's small businesses listed health-care costs as the Number One impediment to economic growth in a poll by Rochester's Center for Governmental Research.

Saddest of all, this costly system can no longer claim to offer premier health care. True, the city's big academic medical centers still boast a galaxy of star doctors and can deliver world-class care to those rich enough to pay for it, but the big subsidies haven't stopped a broader decline. Today Gotham's big institutions are under challenge not just from centers in other cities, like the Mayo Clinic or Johns Hopkins, but from aggressive institutions in the local suburbs, too, like St. Francis Hospital in Roslyn, now the second-largest cardiac surgery center in the country, or New Jersey's Hackensack University Medical Center, which has swiped pediatric specialists away from city hospitals and won national acclaim for its nursing programs. Meanwhile, states like California and Massachusetts have won hundreds of millions of dollars in federally funded medical research away from New York institutions, which are no longer tops at hauling in federal research money.

Most pointedly, although New York's institutions long argued that the rich subsidies were necessary to maintain their national preeminence, today these institutions rarely rate well in studies comparing quality of care around the U.S. No New York State institution is on the current list of the Top 100 Hospitals in America compiled by the well-respected health-care consulting company Solucient. New York's hospitals, with their long patient stays, high bills, and only average mortality rates, simply don't measure up to today's profile of a top hospital. True, many New York institutions care for a troubled population, in which drug use, poverty, and unhealthy behavior make treatment difficult, but most studies of hospital performance adjust for such demographic factors. Solucient's Top 100 Hospitals, for instance, treat more Medicaid patients on average than the typical hospital but turn in superior performance despite this generally sicker population.

Other studies have reached similar conclusions. A 1999 ranking of academic medical centers by the Center for Healthcare Industry Performance Studies in Columbus, Ohio, placed no New York institution in the top 50, and most of the state's and city's academic centers received C and D grades. "Faced with a long history of regulation, New York's hospitals have been forced to focus on financial issues

How HHC Healed Itself

When Rudy Giuliani took office in 1994, one of his first priorities was to staunch the budget-busting $365 million loss at the city's dysfunctional Health and Hospitals Corporation by cutting costs and selling off its money-losing hospitals.

The mayor's efforts hit heavy political opposition, and a judge blocked any privatizations. But no matter: Giuliani appointed Dr. Luis Marcos as head of HHC in mid-1995, and since then the public hospital network has largely achieved what the mayor envisioned for it anyway. Engineering changes that his colleagues in the private sector have been unable—or unwilling—to make, Marcos has eliminated deficits since 1996 and last year ran a surplus of $75 million, while 40 percent of the city's voluntary hospitals lost money.

When Marcos took over, HHC facilities, suffering from a lack of investment, were unattractive and uninviting. Private hospitals—facing reduced reimbursements from HMOs—were starting to poach HHC's Medicaid patients. Union rules left the system bloated and inefficient.

A determined Marcos renegotiated existing relationships with the city's private hospitals, saving HHC $100 million a year. He drove down the length of patient stays at HHC hospitals and eliminated 4,000 empty hospital beds. Unlike the city's private hospitals, whose sweetheart relations with union leader Dennis Rivera have made it difficult for them to shrink their workforce, Marcos's HHC cut 12,000 jobs.

Marcos invested the savings in the system, even unveiling HHC's first advertising campaign. "I told people that from now on, their jobs depended not on subsidies from the city but on attracting patients," he says.

The successes have kept HHC off life support. Still, the system faces numerous challenges because of its historical role serving the city's poorest—and often sickest—patients. HHC now must deal with the rising number of uninsured in the state, especially illegal immigrants who are likely to find their way into a public hospital, not a private institution. About 10 percent of HHC's hospital patients, and 30 percent of those who use its clinics, lack insurance, and the losses this growing group imposes upon HHC threaten to wipe away Marcos's surplus.

Marcos is trying to bolster his balance sheet by closing 27 clinics that are big money losers, but he faces stiff opposition from health-care advocates. The city has agreed to kick in $20 million to help offset some losses from care for the uninsured, and the state recently won federal approval for a new program that will provide the uninsured working poor with coverage—if the Pataki administration can successfully sign up hundreds of thousands of poor, uninsured patients and persuade them to receive their health care through HMOs.

Marcos doesn't rule out closing a major hospital to keep HHC viable, although he concedes that the political obstacles are great. "We've raised the bar very high in the last few years," he says. "Now we have to live up to those standards."

more than on quality of care," explains Jean Chenoweth, director of the Solucient study.

Although such results might shock most New Yorkers, they are no longer so surprising to health-care experts, who view the state's hospital industry as out of step with the most progressive trends in health care. For years, for instance, the state's hospitals, and especially the city's, have kept patients hospitalized much longer on average than other institutions and have justified this practice by claiming that longer stays are needed to heal patients properly—an appealing argument in an age when some HMOs release patients too soon from hospitals. But increasingly, experts view long patient stays as a warning sign, possibly signaling hospitals where complications are common or the most current therapies are not administered promptly and effectively. That is the message underlying a recent federal study that ranked New York State's hospitals fourth-worst in the nation in the treatment of pneumonia in Medicare patients. New York institutions, the study found, were slow to administer drug therapies that effectively fight the illness. Perhaps not surprisingly, the state has a higher age-adjusted mortality rate for pneumonia and influenza than the nation as a whole.

"No New York State institution is on the current list of the Top 100 Hospitals in America."

"I lecture around the country on the relationship of quality of care to parameters like patient stays," one top health-care consultant says. "But when I came to New York to talk about this, they looked at me like I had two heads. They are dinosaurs there."

There's no mystery what the state's health-care system needs to heal itself. But it can't happen unless courageous leadership in Albany forces the necessary moves.

Albany's first goal should be to eliminate the costly subsidies that serve no useful purpose, especially the $544 million paid yearly for graduate medical education and retraining of hospital workers. This steep tax on insurance premiums—which adds some $375 to the cost of a family health policy in New York City—is a classic case of how government money can drive up costs and produce imbalances. After years of training subsidies, New York has more doctors per capita than any other state, and more than half of all doctors trained in the state leave to practice elsewhere. The average cost of training a resident in New York State is now about four times as high as at major medical centers in California or Massachusetts. The current graduate-training tax does little for New York and needs to be scrapped.

The state also needs to shrink the charity/bad-debt fund, a $738 million-a-year pot of money paid for by an 8.18 percent surcharge on health-care services and intended to pay for care for poor people who don't qualify for Medicaid. The state has increased the pot without auditing hospitals' billing practices. An audit would show, the Business Council of New York estimates, that two-thirds of hospitals' uncompensated care doesn't represent charity cases, but uncollected bills due to inefficient administrative or collection procedures. Albany could easily cut this subsidy at least in half and still pay for real charity care.

State legislators need to cool down their mandate fever, too. In addition to the 30 or so existing health-care mandates, over 100 mandate bills are floating around Albany, requiring insurers to cover (among other things) acupuncture, infertility treatments, and hairpieces. To stop this lunacy, the governor needs to use his veto.

Finally, given New York State's surplus of hospital beds, Albany needs to let hospitals fail and close. A movement to shut hospitals is already gaining currency around the state. The *Buffalo News* recently editorialized in favor of eliminating about 25 percent of the beds in that marketplace, and Erie County executive Joel Giambra called for a health-care summit to discuss closing at least one local hospital. When a small hospital in Rochester recently announced it

The Empire State's health-care ills need more than a Band-Aid solution.

THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEGATIVE # 74723

was closing, the city's mayor refused to join an effort by local doctors to keep the institution alive. Mayor William A. Johnson Jr. instead acknowledged that the city had a surplus of hospital beds and that the institution should be allowed to close. The heads of two upstate hospital associations, Gary Fitzgerald at the Iroquois Healthcare Alliance and Dan Sisto of the Health Care Alliance of New York State, also advocate allowing the state's hospital network to shrink. Sisto points approvingly to New Jersey Hospital Association advertisements urging that hospitals there be shut as a way of right-sizing the market in the Garden State.

In Albany, though, it's hard to discern the courage needed to make such moves. The Assembly is the creature of 1199's Rivera; the Senate belongs to the hospitals; and the governor is consumed with worry about his tenuous hold on his job. So the problems of the state's system are only likely to get more acute, especially since the federal government has significantly cut its health-care programs, and the Bush administration is unlikely to contribute to new spending.

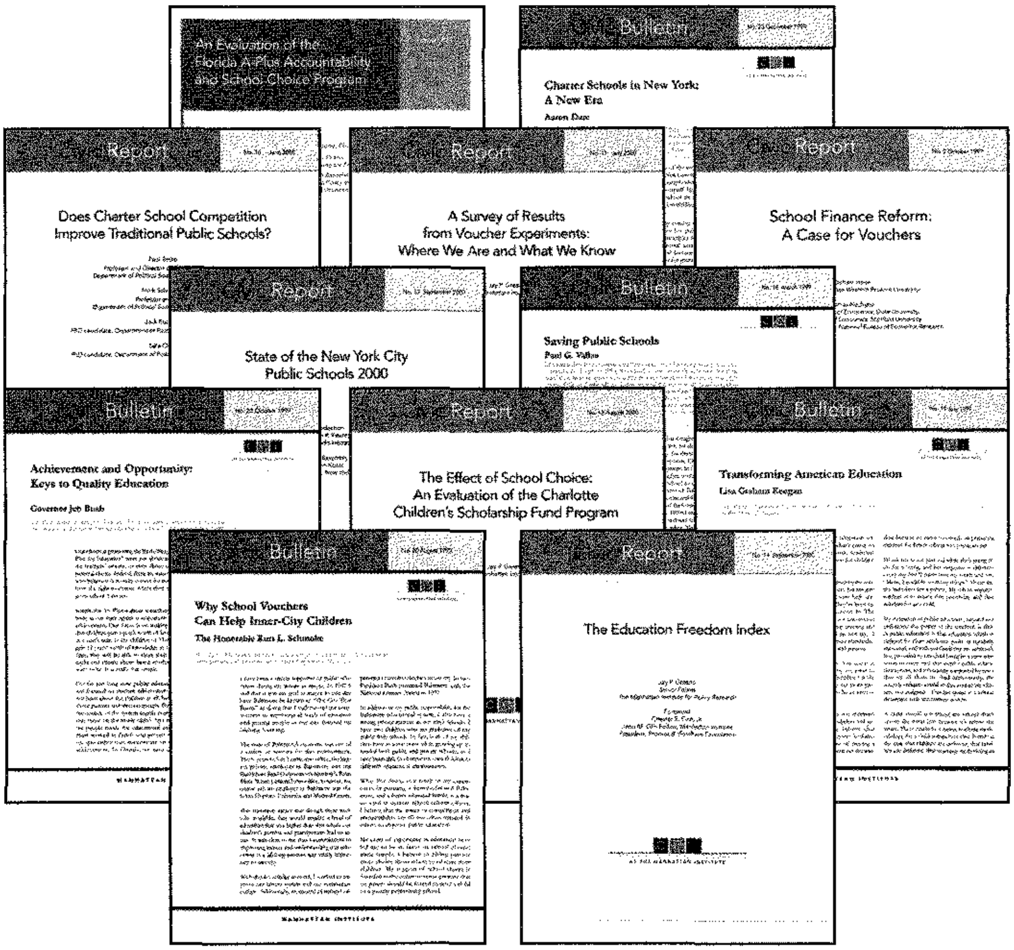
The state's ever growing bills will fall more and more on average New Yorkers. For years they have ignored the state's health-care mess, because someone else—their employers, their insurers—paid the freight. But now they are footing a growing portion of their own insurance, and an explosion of self-employment has left many people completely responsible for their own coverage. When the current system of subsidies expires in mid-2003, the complaints of these average citizens may be loud enough to allow a strong-willed, reform-minded governor—should one emerge—to push through a health-care reform agenda that truly makes a difference in New York. ▪

Research for this article was supported by the Brunie Fund for New York Journalism.

Making the case for education reform . . .

U.S. President George W. Bush **Mayor John Norquist** **Reverend Floyd Flake** **Governor Jeb Bush** **Mayor Bret Schundler** **U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige**

. . . one brick at a time.



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Report

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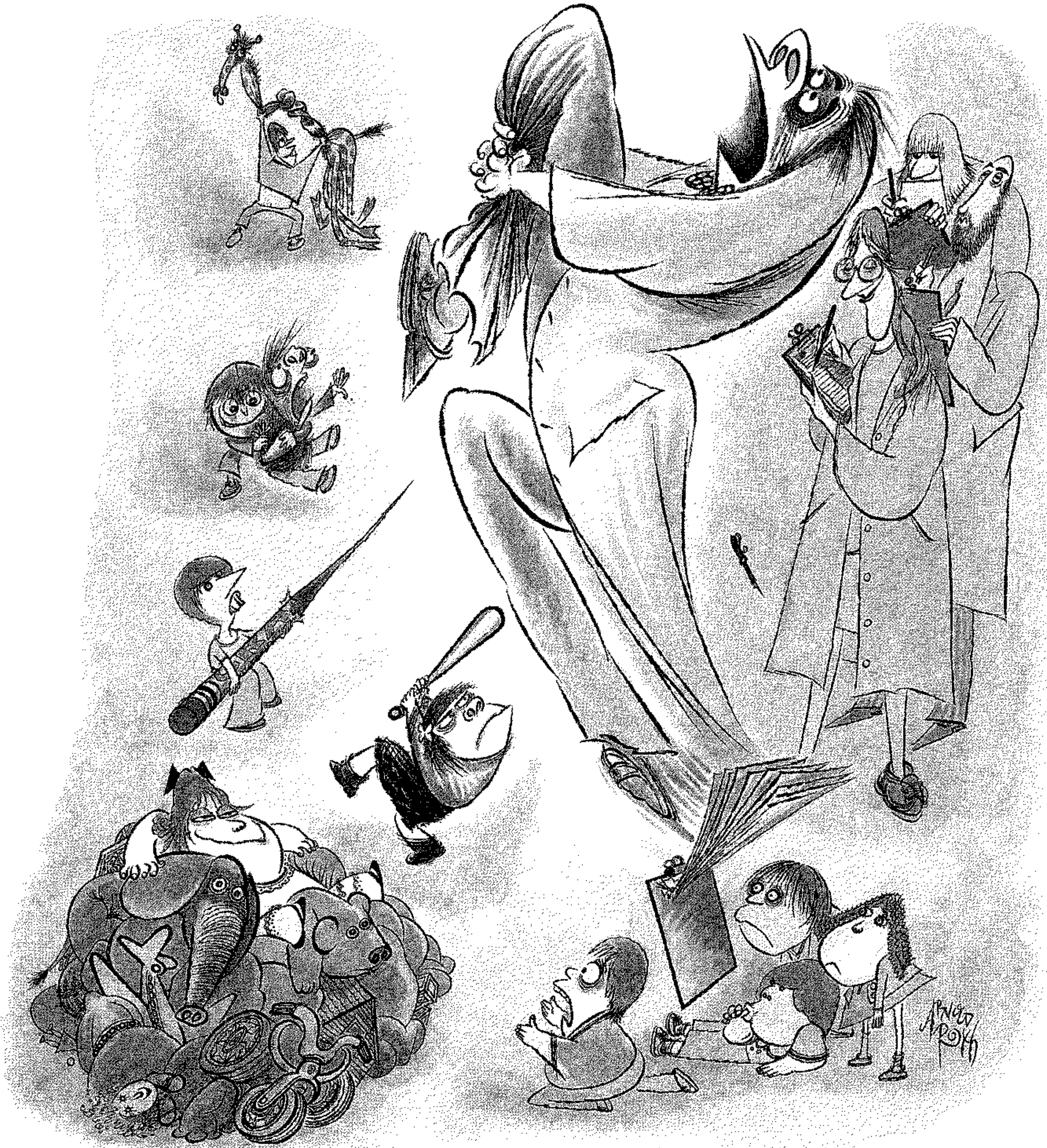

Arnold Roth

Fear and Loathing at the Day-Care Center

A troubling new government study about day care has sent advocates and feminists into denial. Everyone else should take heed.

Kay S. Hymowitz

A few years ago I visited a Houston day-care center called Crème de la Crème. Experts define quality day care as clean and well-equipped centers, with sensitive, well-trained staff—but *this*, as its snooty name boasts, was to quality day care what the Plaza is to Motel 6. Past a lounge filled with overstuffed sofas, children walk into a Disneyland village of Victorian gingerbread storefronts, housing classrooms for Spanish and computer, a "Bibliothèque," and a shop selling Crème accessories. A bridge spanning a goldfish pond leads to a music room, a movement room, and a small library of curriculum guides for the professionally trained and unusually committed caretakers. Older kids can record themselves as they play-act at KREM-TV, the establishment's media center. Outside, along with the usual swings and slides, I saw a "Tyke Garage" crowded with pricey tricycles, and an elaborate shallow water park, with a sandy "beach" shaded by tropical plantings. Staggeringly lavish, this royal pleasure dome seemed to bespeak a child-centeredness that only the world's richest country could afford to build or even dream up. Only one sight seemed out of place: inside the door marked "Bébés, 0–12 Mois," were 30 cribs lined up in three rows of ten.

Not so long ago, the sight of 30 cribs, even supposing them tucked in with 300-count sheets, evoked gloomy associations of hospitals and orphanages. But for the past three decades, day-care centers have become the cheerful setting of a new life script for American women. Shortly after women have their babies, the script goes, they head brightly back to work. Just as brightly, their babies head off to quality day-care centers, where professionally trained caregivers nurture them. The result is fulfillment for everybody: women find new satisfactions in work while achieving economic equality; young children thrive even more than they would under the care of their non-credentialed mothers. As the having-it-all script gained a following, though, certain chinks appeared: for one thing, a lot of women eagerly following its scenario reported suffering from feelings that seemed like . . . guilt. But it was always assumed that a high-quality center like Crème de la Crème would solve this problem, guaranteeing peace of mind for women and success for their children.

Or at least it seemed so until this past April. That was when researchers from the National Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD) released findings showing a link between long hours of non-maternal care for young children and aggressive behavior. Though this was not the first time research had raised questions about whether day care might be associated with problem behavior, it was the first time that a large, longitudinal, government-sponsored, and highly publicized study had done so.

Illustrations by Arnold Roth

That didn't stop most opinion makers, including some of the study investigators themselves, from insisting that the findings were just not so: the research didn't prove cause and effect; it was inconclusive; people just didn't understand it. Furthermore, as far as they were concerned, even findings as carefully reviewed as these clearly were beside the point: after all, institutionalized care is now an established fact of contemporary life, and the only question worth considering is how to make it better. "Our job isn't to dissuade mothers from using child care by sending up these horror stories," influential psychologist Edward Zigler, a Head Start founder, told the *Christian Science Monitor* in an extraordinary admission. "Our real task is to do a public education campaign with parents to get quality care."

Yet the profound question of how we rear the young will—and should—always be an open one, no matter how many experts declare it off-limits. And the truth is, the recent findings raise important questions about the choices young men and women face today. In a nutshell, the results indicate that the having-it-all script got some things wrong. Though promising fuller lives, it relied on an unrealistic, bloodless vision of both women and children, one that underestimated the passions of new mothers and minimized the complexity of socializing the young in an individualistic society. On closer examination, it seems that the script has not expanded the range of human possibility so much as it has demoted the values of love and interdependence associated with the home and family life, in favor of those values embodied in both the workplace and the day-care center: temporary relationships and individual achievement.

The day-care advocates, feminists, researchers, and sympathetic journalists who write the having-it-all script have always had one major public-relations problem: reassuring people that long hours away from mothers would not harm young children. Up until April, this had been a surprisingly easy sell, what with earlier study results showing that day care had no negative effect on infants' trust in their mothers, and that three-year-olds in high-quality day care had better language skills than their peers. Yes, other research suggested potential problems, but it was ambiguous or hidden away in obscure journals.

But when Jay Belsky, one of the two dozen or so researchers involved in the NICHD study, announced some of the most recent findings at a press conference, it looked as if these reassurances were about to go up in smoke. The more hours children have been in the care of someone other than their mothers, Belsky stated, the more likely caregivers were to describe them, both at 54 months and at kindergarten age, as "aggressive"—a term covering a range of behavior from "demands a lot of attention" through "gets in lots of fights" all the way up to "cruelty." Whereas only 6 percent of the children in non-maternal care for less than ten hours a week were described as aggressive, 10 percent of children between ten and 29 hours were so rated and 17 percent of those children in care for over 30 hours. This increased risk of aggression, Belsky went on, cannot be chalked up to maternal depression, poverty, or poor-quality day care, all ways to explain away such findings in previous research; this study controls for all of these.

Asked by someone to expand on the implications of the findings, Belsky, who had been one of the very few psychologists in the field previously to have expressed serious doubts about the effects of long hours of day care, responded: "If more time in all sorts of [day-care] arrangements is predicting disconcerting outcomes, then if you want to reduce the probability of those outcomes, you reduce the time in care. Extend parental leave and part-time work."

Belsky could be accused of jumping the gun—all of the NICHD's day-care research is observational and, strictly speaking, doesn't by itself lead to conclusions about cause and effect or to recommendations about policy—but his proposals about what to do weren't all that radical. After all, though mainstream feminists generally emphasize "full workplace equality," advocating quality day care so that Mom and Dad can work equally hard, unhindered by Junior, a sizable group of women have also been making a plea for the parental leave and flexible work hours Belsky recommends. No matter. Committed to the proposition that there can be no middle ground between a wholehearted embrace of the all-day institutionalization of infants and toddlers and the fetishizing of motherhood in the style of the 1950s, feminists have greeted any suggestion that young children might suffer from long hours away from their mothers the way they'd greet a Taliban pronouncement that women would no longer be allowed to drive or exchange money. In the *Los Angeles Times*, Peggy Orenstein blasted Belsky's comments as "a 1950s-style attack." Even Belsky's co-researchers were furious. His behavior was "completely unprofessional," colleague Sarah Friedman told the online magazine *Salon*. "I know he differs from the group," she continued remarkably. "But . . . I thought that, since he was invited to represent the story, he would represent the party line."

"Party line" is an apt term. Day-care researchers may be scientists by training, but they look more like professional advocates in their efforts to sugarcoat the effects of day care on children and so to smooth the way to the workplace for young mothers. Consider the way NICHD tried to spin its last big news, in 1997. It reported two major findings that year: first, children in high-quality care showed slightly larger cognitive and linguistic gains than children in poor-quality care. Second, the more time children were in day care, the less affection they showed to their mothers at 36 months, and likewise the less sensitive their mothers were toward them. By the time the findings were massaged into a press release, they had been creatively transformed into a toast to quality day care: "New research . . . indicates that the quality of child care for very young children does matter for their cognitive development and their use of language. . . . In addition, quality child care in the early years . . . can also lead to better mother-child interaction, the study finds." Only pages later did the press release mention—quickly and dismissively—the more negative findings: "Researchers found that the amount of non-maternal child care was weakly associated with less sensitive and engaged mother-child interaction."

The press happily colluded with the NICHD in headlining the good news for having-it-all script-lovers. "THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT," *Time* crowed. "DAY CARE STUDY OFFERS REASSURANCE TO WORKING PARENTS," the *Washington Post* announced. "GOOD DAY CARE FOUND TO AID COGNITIVE SKILLS OF CHILDREN" went the emollient headline in the *New York Times*. "These are heartwarming findings," Sarah Friedman—evidently satisfied that all of this toed the party line—told *USA Today*.

The press obliged no less readily when investigators tried to minimize this year's findings, showing bad news for day care. Reporters sought out interviews with the most skeptical "experts" and listed the reasons not to take it all very seriously—something few of them had bothered to do in 1997. No one seemed to notice that researchers all but admitted that they had looked for ways to make the 2001 findings go away. "When you come out with a finding that is negative and scary, you want to make sure you've done every possible analysis," NICHD researcher Alison Clarke-Stewart was quoted as saying. "There's more caution in the group in drawing implications that might be worrisome to parents," agreed her colleague Robert Pianta.

"Researchers all but admitted that they had looked for ways to make the 2001 findings go away."

Reassuring the public that no harm would come to babies if their mothers left them for 40 or 50 hours a week or more may have been the most challenging of the scriptwriters' tasks, but it was not the only one they faced. They also had to edit out any suggestion that women themselves might suffer from long hours away from their offspring. Gloria Steinem once said, approvingly, "We've become the men we wanted to marry." But some women found that, even so, they still had mothers' hearts.

Woe to those who got in the way of the attempt to deny maternal urges that might conflict with the script's fervent work ethic, however: as witness the reaction that greeted Felice Schwartz's 1989

Harvard Business Review article recommending that companies should have two tracks for women—one for those who were childless or inclined to hand most of their children's care over to someone else, and another (later dubbed "The Mommy Track") for those who wanted more time with their children. Those few mainstream feminists who didn't blast Schwartz were content to leave the dilemma she had pinpointed as a problem with no name. According to Ann Crittenden, author of the recent *The Price of Motherhood*, the editors of women's magazines like *Working Mother* and *New York Woman* told Schwartz: "It may be true what you're saying, but we just can't discuss these things in print."

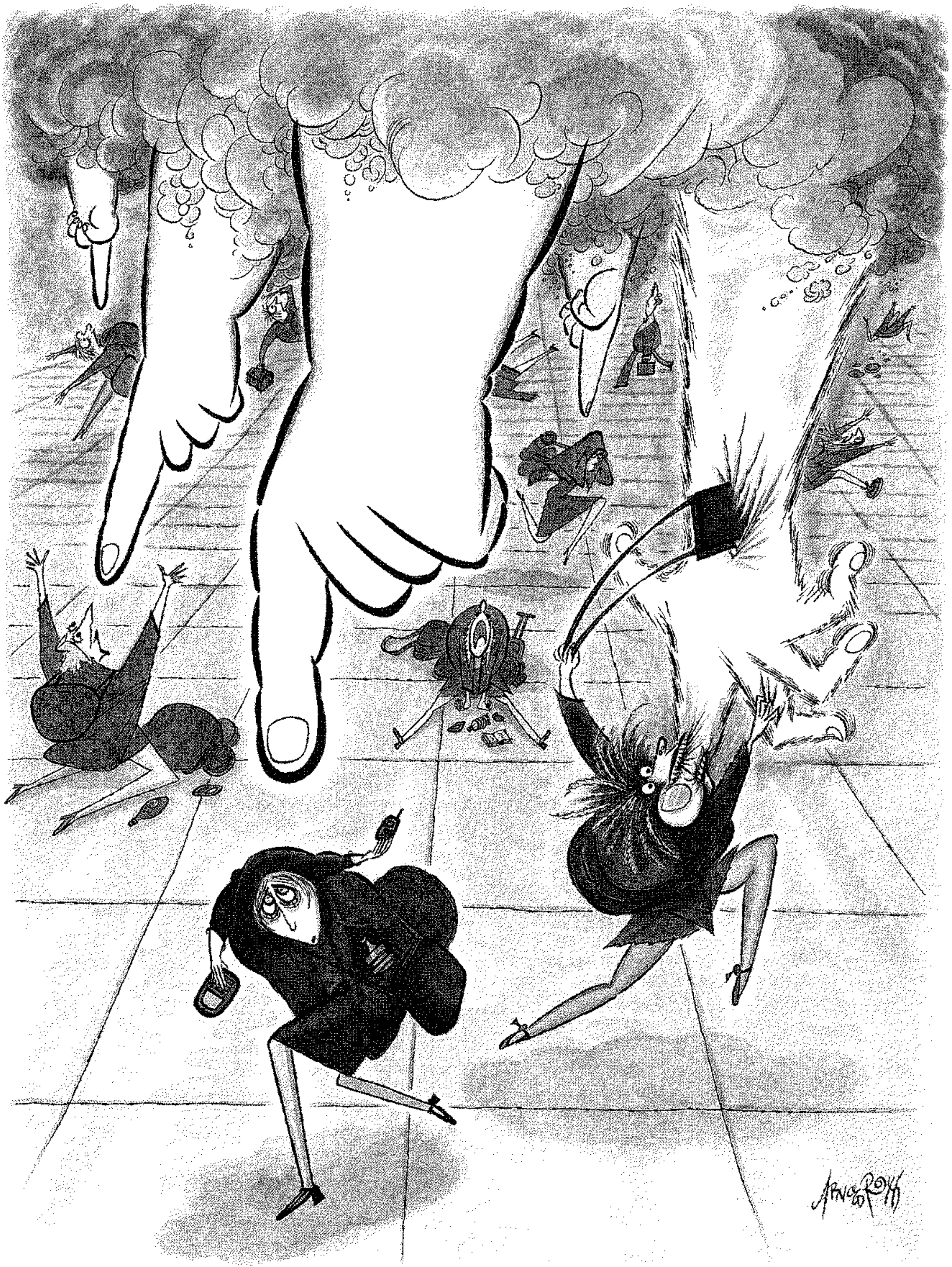
Day-care researchers also didn't want to discuss any strong maternal feelings that might make the having-it-all script seem less than happily-ever-after. In fact, they implied, women who suffered from such feelings were immature and neurotic. In one 1997 paper, NICHD researchers went so far as to hint that putting an infant into a day-care center was a sign of a mother's psychological health. Mothers who went back to work when their babies were between three and five months, the paper reported, "scored higher on measures of extroversion and agreeableness" and—*quelle coincidence!*—were more likely to use center-based care. Those mothers who were reluctant to leave their babies, on the other hand, suffered from what the researchers condescendingly dubbed "separation anxiety" and tended to rely on relatives for care. Other experts, more commonly, reduced the emotional conflict between maternal love and career ambition to "guilt," the product of social demands unfairly foisted on women. "As a society," Barbara Willer of the National Association for the Education of Young Children told the *Washington Post* after the recent NICHD findings came out, "we've socialized women into feeling guilty." The experts' memo to mothers who don't want to leave their babies: Get over it.

But though mothers today might not want to return to life in the pre-script dark ages, clearly they don't want to get over their babies either. In *The Price of Motherhood*, Ann Crittenden gives voice to precisely the sorts of messy maternal longings that script advocates, in Orwellian fashion, had sought to turn into non-feelings—feelings that are nothing like guilt and anxiety. An economics reporter for the *New York Times* and a Pulitzer Prize nominee, Crittenden should have been a poster woman for the having-it-all script. She was a success in a formerly male world; she and her husband had a comfortable income; she could have her baby, quality day care, and her glamorous job, too. Instead, she was "stricken with baby-hunger: a passionate almost physical longing for a child." And it didn't stop after her baby was born. "I fell hopelessly in love with this tiny new creature," she continues, "with an intensity that many mothers describe as 'besotted.'"

"Besotted" she must have been, because, in an almost incomprehensible betrayal of the script, she left her plum job at the *Times* to raise her child. Nor is she an anomaly. According to a *Newsweek* article last year entitled "Revisiting the Mommy Track," mothers between 36 and 40 increasingly opt for part-time work when their first child is born and often leave the labor force altogether with the second.

And other, even more conclusive data suggest that many women are similarly besotted. Of course, that's not the way these numbers usually sound. Almost every expert paper or news article you read about child care contains a sentence that goes something like this: "Close to 60 percent of mothers with children under a year are in the labor force, up from 31 percent in 1976." And that's true—as far as it goes. But the Bureau of Labor Statistics categorizes anyone who works for *an hour a week* as being "in the labor force"—and this fact alters the picture of maternal employment considerably. Among those 60 percent of mothers in the workforce are freelancers working at home while their babies nap. Among those 60 percent are also people like Susan Deritis, the publicity director of Mothers at Home, a support group for women who have elected to stay home with their children. She grabs a few hours to work every day—at home. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, she is a working mother, and, according to advocates, she is one of the reasons we should protect women from "worrisome" news about day care.

The real truth is that only 39 percent of mothers of children three and under, and only 43 percent of those with kids six and under, worked full-time in 2000. A Census Bureau pamphlet entitled "Who's Minding the Kids?" reports that 42 percent of kids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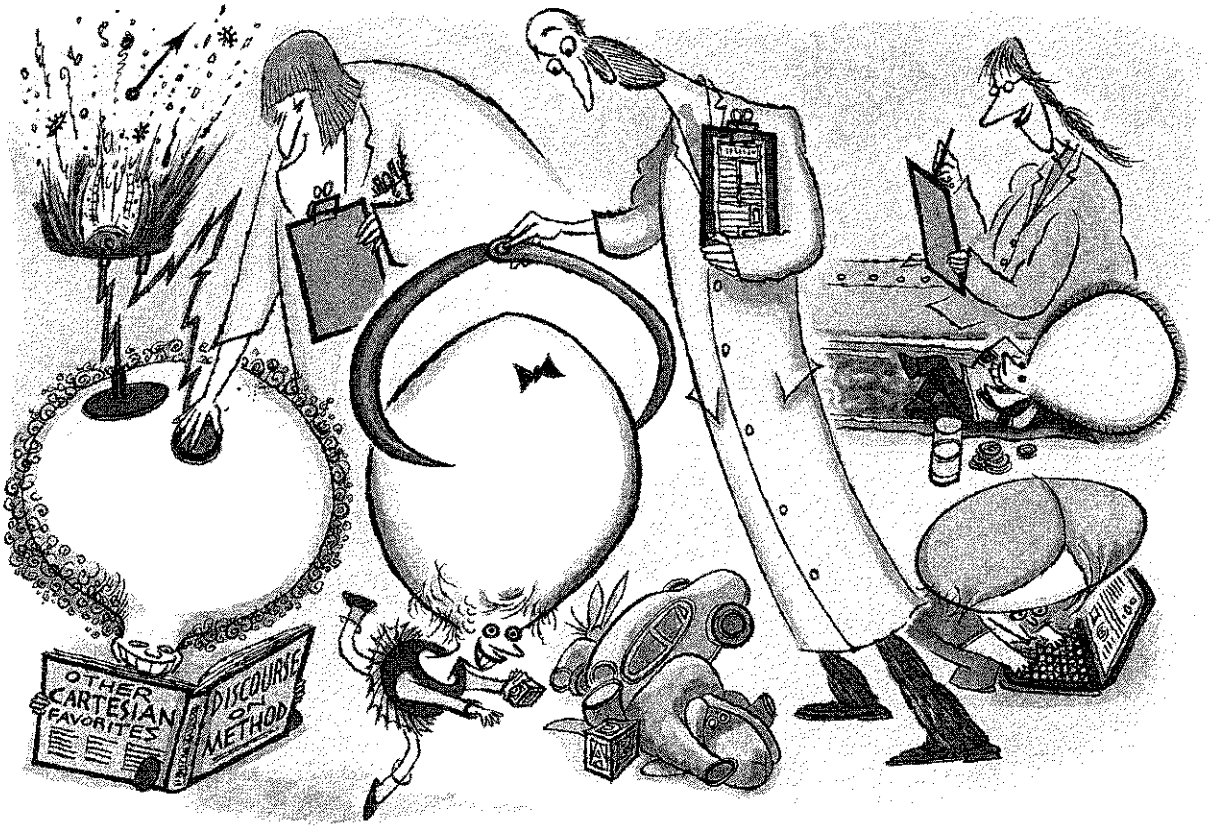

under *five* have at least one parent neither employed nor in school. Another 19.4 percent of those children have a parent working only part-time.

What all this adds up to is the fact that somewhere over 60 percent of preschool children have at least one parent, the vast majority of them mothers, who either doesn't work or only works part-time. Given that close to one-third of all children in the United States are born to single mothers, who work at a considerably higher rate than married mothers, this is a particularly remarkable figure. It means that, despite the considerable financial sacrifice involved, a majority of parents of preschool-age children—and an even bigger majority of *married* mothers—are the primary caretakers of their preschool children. A 2000 survey from Public Agenda lends support to this picture: it found that 62 percent of respondents would like policies making it easier for one parent to stay home during a child's first few years, as opposed to only 30 percent who want policies improving the affordability and quality of day care.

Yet according to expert opinion—and government-sponsored expert opinion at that—findings in support of these views and in support of mothers who act on them are deemed "worrisome." The only welcome results are those that pave the path to the workplace. A Marxist surveying all this from the purgatory of defunct ideas might accuse the experts not of protecting women from disturbing information, but of being tools of the corporate state attempting to expand and pacify the labor force.

But something very different is going on for today's followers of the having-it-all script. They are not dupes of market forces, and, unlike the original scriptwriters themselves, they're unlikely to be feminists. They are, instead, eager devotees of the contemporary creed of ecstatic capitalism ("Ecstatic Capitalism's Brave New Work Ethic," Winter 2001). After years of taking A.P. courses and music lessons, listening to girl-power pep talks, and watching perfectly buffed and coiffed television-drama lawyers, they have learned to take for granted that job achievement is the primary arena for glamour, self-expression, and self-fulfillment. Of course, they expect to marry and have

children, but they expect to consign them to a secondary role in the drama of life. After all, unlike dreary motherhood and housewifery, work for these young achievers promises public recognition, meaningful activity, creativity—maybe even adventure. Why, the workplace could even offer the camaraderie and friendships born out of intense devotion to a mutual cause, as on *ER*!

But as the Ann Crittendens of this world discover, there is an emptiness in the soul of woman under ecstatic capitalism. The office, with its ephemeral projects, water-cooler intimacies, and disposable employees, cannot satisfy the hunger for enduring connections, for the happiness that comes from the passionate love stirred by an utterly dependent being, for knowing and being known in ways only possible in the private space of family life, a hunger that neither 30 years of feminism nor ecstatic capitalism has been able to dispatch to a locked box marked Gender Stereotype.

The ideology of day care perfectly captures this revolution in values. Day-care devotees don't give much thought to young children's social and emotional growth, believing them to be relatively simple, even relatively unimportant, psychological matters. It is cognitive development, with its promise of future achievement, that really gets their juices flowing. In part, their enthusiasm is understandable. It is easy to quantify and measure things like vocabulary and short-term memory; when it comes to the social and emotional development of a two-year-old, say, it's not even clear what scientists should be looking for, much less rating, outside of some gross maladjustment.

But children's cognitive development is at the heart of the having-it-all script chiefly because experts and parents have concluded that, in an increasingly meritocratic and work-obsessed society, brains win. Therefore, infants and toddlers don't need "besotted" mothers—or fathers and grandmothers, for that matter—so much as they need good teachers. Seizing on highly publicized research in neuroscience, today's parents obsessively buy their babies Mozart CDs to improve spatial skills, French tapes to advance language development, crib mirrors to promote visual development, and textured teethers to stimulate the senses. For their part, experts willingly explain away research findings showing a link between long hours away from mother and childhood aggression, while they noisily rejoice over findings showing that quality day care boosts verbal skills a tad.

No wonder that experts cheerfully observe that infant and toddler care is becoming increasingly like school. "Preschool is child care. Child care is preschool," as Danielle Ewen of the Children's Defense Fund told *Newsweek.* But day care doesn't provide education in the humanistic or civic sense; it is all business: it is school in the *vocational* sense. The point is to train babies, yes—for the workplace. "Good-quality child care is education," according to a pamphlet on day care from the Child Care Action Campaign, whose title—"Preparing the Workers of Tomorrow: A Report on Early Learning"—apparently is not a joke. It makes a certain kind of plodding sense. After all, you go to school, you're supposed to get smarter. You get smarter, you get a better job.

The problem with all this—aside from the absurdity of seeing a toothless infant batting at his crib gym as an executive-in-training—is that it slights the development of the young child's individual personality in the broadest sense. Yes, the problem-solving brain grows exponentially during early childhood, but so does the conscious self, the individual person with an identity that is larger than cognitive skill. Selfhood of the sort Americans have long prized implies a personal history—with its unique places and people—and a distinctive way of viewing the world that evolves in large measure out of experience within a family and a home with its own character. Moreover, the experience of selfhood finds continual reinforcement from family members who affirm the child as an individual like no other. Collective care, by its very definition, cannot do this.

On the kibbutz famously studied by eminent child analyst Bruno Bettelheim in the 1960s, for instance, all infants were fed precisely the same amount, since "it was assumed their needs were entirely alike." In the seventies, sociologist Ruth Sidel found something similar in Chinese nurseries, where the group orientation was so deep that by the time children were toilet-trained, they had learned to move their bowels in unison. Of course, this uniformity offends the Western sense of what constitutes a fully realized human being, and American experts try to define quality care, with requirements like low adult-child ratios and "sensitive, warm caregivers," in a way that would assure individualized treatment even within an institution. Surely this is to be preferred over synchronized bowel movements.

But in the final analysis, "quality" care is still a pale imitation of what young children can get from besotted families. Even if the professional caregiver "responds to vocalizations" or "places infant near where she can see other infants"—two items on the NICHD researchers' list of "positive caregiving behaviors"—she cannot represent a distinctive perspective or imprint her personality on the unformed child. Nor can she possibly have a deep commitment to—or love of—that child, with all his unique tics and tendencies. Not only does she have several other babies to care for at that moment; she knows that in short order each of them will be moving on to the pre-toddler or toddler room to a new set of sensitive, warm, but ultimately replaceable, teacher-caregivers.

Most important in the current debate, the having-it-all script, with its veneration of workplace and cognitive achievement, seriously minimizes the emotional complexity of the civilizing process in an individualistic society. Families not only nurture the child's individual personality; they also teach the child how to moderate it. As today's child-development experts ignore, but as generations of psychologists understood, the child does not simply learn self-control the way he learns to develop his fine motor skills. He must internalize the moral requirements of his culture, make them part of his very nature and identity, so that they feel as natural as breathing.

Of course, there are any number of ways this can happen. In many pre-modern societies, children learned to obey society's rules because they feared the rod. In the kibbutz, according to Bettelheim, children behaved because they learned to identify closely with the peer group and didn't want to let it down. But most Western bourgeois societies, especially ours, discipline children through love, a huge psychic undertaking. Out of love, parents, particularly mothers, devote themselves to nurturing the child’s individual talents, interests, and temperament. Meanwhile, the child’s desire to please the adored mother and his fear of losing her love when she disapproves of him make him *want* to behave as she wishes him to. This intense emotional stew has its dangers, but it has managed to cultivate individuals who can balance individual expressiveness with self-restraint. And it does suggest a reason why young children spending long hours away from their mothers might be more inclined to “get in lots of fights” and show “cruelty.” They have not had the opportunity to develop with sufficient intensity the bonds that anchor the bourgeois conscience.

> **“Developmental psychologists have persistently glimpsed a link between day care and behavior problems.”**

Though no one bothered to mention it during the latest NICHD fracas, experts have had evidence of something amiss in the having-it-all script’s view of how children become socialized for a long time. Ever since developmental psychologists began studying the subject in the late 1960s, as the first wave of postwar mothers started flooding into the labor force, they have persistently glimpsed indications of some link between day care and behavior problems. Alison Clarke-Stewart, one of the NICHD investigators, in a 1993 book that is otherwise so rhapsodic that you come away wondering whether institutionalized care should be mandatory for all infants, nevertheless had to admit that there were substantial findings showing day-care kids to be “less polite, less agreeable, less respectful of other’s rights, more irritable, more rebellious . . . more aggressive with their peers.”

Clearly none of this means that day care is a training ground for the future Timothy McVeighs of America. Even the NICHD findings show only modest effects: children the study rated as more aggressive were still within the range of normal. Moreover, 17 percent of children in the general population are rated aggressive on the scale the researchers used, the same percentage as the kids in the longest hours of care. And, for some underclass kids, there’s evidence that full-time day care may provide nurture lacking at home.

But the widespread, relentless, high-pressure effort to deny that findings like these have any significance—or to put a mendacious positive spin on them—springs not just from an unwillingness to hear bad news about day care but from the broader tendency of our era to trivialize the deep problem of the socialization of children, especially thorny in a culture always needing to guard against the excesses of individualism. “Is it possible that kids are born aggressive, defiant, raring to talk too much at the first opportunity? Is that a bad thing?” *Salon*’s Jennifer Foote Sweeney wonders. “There’s no evidence to suggest that an aggressive kindergartener will grow up to be a bully,” chimes in an editorial in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. “In fact, she might just become a CEO. . . . Also largely overlooked was the good news that children in high-quality day care are academically advanced. . . . Make that a smart, articulate CEO.” As long as the child grows up to be a high-achiever—meaning, it seems, that she escapes the Mommy Track—is it really so important that she is obnoxious or even vaguely immoral? Success trumps character and civility any day.

All this confirms what philosophers have known since the time of Plato, of course: how we rear our children reflects the kind of society we are. And here, the having-it-all script should give us pause. Its veneration of work and professional achievement over all other human goods pays insufficient attention to the well-being of children and the society they will inherit.

Our young mothers- and fathers-to-be face difficult choices, which they need to make with as much wisdom and understanding as possible. If the experts and the pundits would only let them. ■

Don't Let CDCs Fool You

The much-touted community development corporations are just the War on Poverty by another—highly misleading—name.

Howard Husock

Conventional wisdom about cities has it that community development corporations (CDCs) are one of the great successes of urban policy, responsible for sparking a revival of inner-city neighborhoods across the nation. The CDC movement, now three decades old, gets credit for physically upgrading shabby neighborhoods and also for uplifting the poor who live in them by organizing them to help themselves. CDCs, write Paul Grogan and Tony Proscio in *Comeback Cities*—a new Bible of the CDC movement and a book that ranks CDCs ahead even of improved public safety in helping to bring back cities—are "citizen-formed self-help groups trying to revitalize their own neighborhoods." These bootstrap operations, write Grogan and Proscio, are the answer to the question: "If government on its own has repeatedly failed to save inner cities, who can save them?" Such rhetoric has helped make CDCs popular left, right, and center.

Without doubt, CDCs can point to apartment buildings they've had a hand in building or renovating and supermarkets they've helped recruit to inner-city locations. And, true, local residents serve on their boards of directors. But, fundamentally, the methods of the movement are not what its organizers claim them to be, and the movement's impact is not a healthy one. Rather than being true grassroots groups, CDCs add up to a cleverly decentralized HUD, almost entirely financed through federal funding and provisions of the federal tax code, not through the assets and initiative of neighborhood residents. CDCs are in fact a sub-rosa version of the 1960s War on Poverty, built on that era's false assumptions that, since "the system" necessarily conspires to keep the poor in poverty, only political action can ameliorate their condition. Or, as the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED), the trade group for the CDC "industry," revealingly puts it: "CDCs are helping to empower millions of people *left out of* the economic mainstream" [emphasis added].

These organizations threaten to maintain the poor in a dependency that runs counter to the new spirit of welfare reform. Rather than encouraging upward mobility and genuine self-reliance, the implicit message of the CDC movement to the poor is: Stay put and organize for government benefits. As a result, CDCs are bad for cities; like the public housing they claim to supersede and improve upon, they threaten to keep the poor frozen in poverty and cities forever frozen as warehouses for the eternally poor. Rather than representing a true urban revival, CDC neighborhoods are Potemkin villages, sustained by government resources and outside organizers, and potentially impeding the new, spontaneous development that is the hallmark of urban vitality.

Today's CDC "industry," as insiders insist on calling it, is huge, consisting of some 3,600 such organizations heavily concentrated in the Northeast and Midwest and on the West Coast. More than 50 are in New York; more than 20 in Boston. They proliferated during the Clinton years, increasing by 64 percent between 1995 and 1999 alone. They are not corporations in the normal sense, of course, but nonprofit organizations, run by paid employees, not by a volunteer corps of engaged citizens, though they claim to speak for the neighborhood around them and are generally housed in small storefronts or converted apartments in the midst of their modest neighborhood domains. Over the past 20 years,

Photographs by Bobby Neel Adams

they have, through direct and indirect federal subsidies, built more than 500,000 units of low-rent (though often high-cost) housing—nearly half as many apartments as the entire existing stock of U.S. public housing.

Though they struggle to sound politically centrist, CDCs cling unambiguously to the left end of the spectrum. The theme of this February's annual NCCED convention, for example, was "Community Economic Development Equals Economic Justice," and one speaker, evidently reflecting the views of his large, enthusiastic audience, referred to newly "selected" President Bush. Walk into local CDC offices and you feel like you've entered a 1960s time warp. A bulletin board at the Urban Edge CDC office in Boston's Roxbury section, for instance, advertises a job opening at the local chapter of "Bikes not Bombs." A placard at the Fifth Avenue Committee, a CDC in Brooklyn's Park Slope, proclaims, "Our mission is to advance social and economic justice in South Brooklyn." The Fifth Avenue Committee sponsors a campaign opposing Giuliani administration policies that require some welfare recipients to work in public jobs, and it supports a "campaign of conscience" to generate "community solidarity" in favor of a "displacement-free zone" in South Brooklyn.

Such campaigns, and the core activities of CDCs generally, reflect beliefs about cities and the poor that have not really changed since the 1960s—even as prosperity has vastly lowered unemployment and brought millions of the poor into the workforce. CDCs operate on the implicit Marxist belief that "the system" will exclude a significant number of people from adequate reward for their labor, or from the chance for meaningful employment in the first place; these people—in effect, the army of surplus labor that Marx believed would always exist in order to keep a steady downward pressure on wages—need permanent protection. Their neighborhoods should, as a matter of "economic justice," be made more pleasant through subsidized renovated housing, and they must be protected against displacement by gentrification for the same reason. To suggest that this army of surplus labor might adapt and prosper on its own is a cruel mockery.

Restaurant

CDC mismanagement caused this Bronx building to be vacated.

CDC theorists inherited these deeply pessimistic views from the 1960s social planners who created HUD, on the belief that private market forces would never be drawn to restore poor urban neighborhoods or to create jobs in them, and that therefore government must provide both income support and housing for the poor trapped in cities. As early as 1969, the economists John Kain and Joseph Persky recognized the perniciousness of this view: they cautioned that the earliest CDCs (and federal efforts to rebuild the inner city generally) didn't encourage upward mobility but instead were merely attempts to "gild the ghetto"—

while keeping it a ghetto. In this spirit, fundamental to the CDC project, *Comeback Cities* author Grogan has asserted that, in improving the lives of the poor, it makes sense for housing to "come first."

Far from representing the break with big-government anti-poverty programs that its advocates represent it to be, the CDC movement came into existence—quite self-consciously—to be a better-managed, clandestine continuation of the War on Poverty, designed by one of the original architects of the Johnson administration's war. The late Mitchell Sviridoff, a onetime Detroit union organizer and Lindsay administration welfare chief, had, as an aide to the mayor of New Haven in the early 1960s, made that city the leading advertisement for the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas Program—the first effort to invest massive outside funds in the rebuilding of ghettos by giving grants to community groups. The Gray Areas Program became the template for the Johnson administration's Model Cities Program. As a student in Sviridoff's "Workshop on Urban Blight" in 1982 at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School, I watched him flesh out the CDC blueprint he had created shortly before, while he was at the end of his long stint as a Ford Foundation program officer.

A hard-boiled but realistic man of the left, Sviridoff had accepted two key critiques of the War on Poverty—those of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who dismissed Model Cities as fractious, politically confrontational, and corrupt in his book *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*, and of Edward Banfield, who identified the underclass as the real threat to life in poor neighborhoods in his classic *The Unheavenly City*. In Sviridoff's new CDC model, rigorous screening of tenants was going to avoid the problems Banfield had identified. Strict financial accountability—by an outside overseer—would prevent the waste and corruption of Model Cities. To perform this function, just before he left the Ford Foundation, Sviridoff had funded something called the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), designed to funnel foundation money directly to newly forming CDCs—often in the form of loans, so as to encourage business-like operations among the recipients. Sviridoff himself became LISC's president. While the methods were a new wrinkle, the overall goal of Sviridoff's movement was the same as the War on Poverty's: stable poor neighborhoods—that is, poor neighborhoods made stable for their present populations through physical improvement financed by outside funds.

The financing system for the CDC movement's hundreds of thousands of units of subsidized housing is a marvel of what federal officials like to call "off-budget" financing. The linchpin of the system is the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, legislated by Congress in 1986 and made permanent in 1993. This device offers a dollar-for-dollar tax reduction to those who "invest" in subsidized low-income housing. Corporations looking to limit their tax liability while publicizing apparent good works flock to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit. How do a myriad of small, local CDCs get matched up with big corporations looking to make such investments? Here's where the Local Initiatives Support Corporation comes in. LISC—where Paul Grogan succeeded Mike Sviridoff as president in 1987—makes the match between those looking for tax relief and individual CDCs.

Banks are especially eager to play this game—not because CDCs are good investments but because of pressure from federal regulators through the Community Reinvestment Act (see "The Trillion-Dollar Bank Shakedown That Bodes Ill for Cities," Winter 2000). The act (which the Clinton administration vigorously enforced) calls on banks to direct funds to so-called underserved areas—in other words, areas where it doesn't pay, in real financial terms, for them to invest. The threat of regulatory sanction—particularly, delays in merger approvals—leads banks eagerly to seek good Community Reinvestment Act "ratings" and thus to enter into much-ballyhooed "public-private partnerships" with CDCs, which are said (in a recent, complimentary David Broder column in the *Washington Post*, for instance) to "leverage" private funds. It may be no coincidence that, in addition to his executive duties at the banking and financial services giant Citigroup, former Clinton administration treasury secretary Robert Rubin has, as his community service, become the chairman of LISC. Nor is it any coincidence that, according to the NCCED, 28 percent of CDCs engage in pro-Community Reinvestment Act "advocacy."

So it is that CDCs raise capital. But they can't typically raise enough this way—low-income housing tax credits assigned to the states by the IRS based on state population are limited. CDCs typically raise additional development capital through low-interest mortgages made available to them by state housing finance agencies. These public authorities borrow at below-market interest rates and funnel the proceeds to CDCs.

Even such low-interest mortgages must be paid back, however. That means collecting the rent every month. Here, old-fashioned federal spending comes into play: HUD's Section 8 housing voucher program typically pays the monthly rent on CDC apartments. HUD normally sets rent levels incredibly high—which allows CDCs to pay their staffs and meet expenses. One Boston CDC director recently crowed to me about his success in persuading HUD to set the "fair market" rent for the CDC-owned apartments in his low-income neighborhood at no less than $2,300 a month.

> **"CDCs use the power of government to divert funds from other, probably more productive, investments."**

The government-created combination of tax credits, bank regulation, and rent subsidies has proved to be a financing juggernaut, a stealth housing production program ideal for the era in which big government was supposedly over. Between 1995 and 1998, CDCs used the system to build 300,000 units of new, subsidized housing. Although the NCCED likes to trumpet the number of jobs and apartments CDCs have "created" this way, they do so only by using the power of government to divert funds from other, probably more productive, investments. Beneath the illusion of market-based investment is the reality of the coercion of private capital.

The CDC financing juggernaut can be as lucrative as it is effective. Subsidized, no-risk development generates large developers' fees for CDCs during the construction process and high management fees thereafter. Take, for example, the proposed renovation of a 28-unit apartment building recently approved for tax credits by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency. Actual construction costs will be $133,000 per unit. But the total costs will be much higher: $248,000 per unit, with much of the excess—$33,000 per unit for acting as general contractor, $27,000 per unit in "fees and overhead"—going into the CDC's coffers.

What's wrong with this? Just because CDC's misrepresent themselves as far more bootstrap-based than they really are, is their activity—the Sorcerer's Apprentice–like production of nonprofit-run subsidized housing—problematic? The answer is yes.

As with public housing and other philanthropic housing projects in the past, there's always the danger of insufficient maintenance. Warning signs of bad maintenance, along with full-blown maintenance problems, have already turned up in CDC buildings. Most CDCs apparently are not putting enough aside for looming repairs. On-Site Insight, a private firm specializing in such assessments, recently examined 102 properties in the "affordable housing" stock and found that "seven out of 10 developments face unmet capital needs." It judged that CDCs should set aside at least $2,200 more per unit per year for maintenance and repairs and that CDCs owning older buildings, where maintenance needs loom larger, should set aside even more. CDC advocates acknowledge this problem. Francie Ferguson of the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, a federal entity established to assist nonprofit housing developers, observes: "The assumption is that the hard thing to do is to get housing built. In fact, the hard thing is to run it well."

The details of deferred maintenance can be chilling. An extreme case is the South Bronx group called Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association, one of the original CDCs Mike Sviridoff funded through LISC. This year, LISC had to foreclose on 14 Banana Kelly buildings and seek other management, because, as the *New York Times* put it, "Its buildings have deteriorated; tenants have complained of no heat, of rats, of repairs not done. . . . 866 Beck Street is a building so badly deteriorated that it had to be vacated." The *Times*'s excellent June 2000 series about the organization—which *Comeback Cities* featured as a "block club turned builder"—quoted a Bronx community board member and Banana Kelly tenant who said, "Our savior has become a slumlord."

Or consider the example of a Boston development called Tent City, born out of a protest group's occupation of vacant land by tents to dramatize what it saw as the need for subsidized housing. The Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency's 1999 assessment of Tent City's condition found the following, according to an internal agency memo: "Eight roofs had active leaks. Carbon monoxide was at unacceptable levels because of poor maintenance of the ventilation system." Despite all the CDC rhetoric about grassroots oversight, the project had hired a private security firm, but it was "not performing up to standards," and lacked a working relationship with the Boston police, "*the latter critical given the past history of youth gangs and drugs*" [emphasis added]. Again, despite all the rhetoric of community control, Tent City had also contracted out its overall maintenance—like 41 percent of all CDCs.

BANANA KELLY

Banana Kelly suggests that corruption can infect CDCs.

Yet the maintenance issue isn't what's most worrisome about CDCs (and so far, many appear well-maintained). The real worry focuses on the people who actually live in CDC housing. Just like old-fashioned public housing projects, the new subsidized accommodation mostly houses single mothers, who are the main recipients of the Section 8 rent subsidies on which CDC financing relies. (Only 8 percent of households receiving rent vouchers are families with children with both spouses present.) In other words, rather than being an authentic breakthrough in building healthy communities for working families, CDCs are just part of the vast financial support system for illegitimacy, with all its bad effects for both mothers and their children.

Because CDC staffers misunderstand the reason their tenants are poor—blaming supposed injustices in the economic system rather than the bad life decisions of welfare mothers—they're involved in preserving the old welfare culture that the 1996 welfare reforms have begun to supersede. CDCs, doggedly faithful to their rhetoric about "stable" neighborhoods, don't urge their tenants to move up and out. Urban Edge estimates that at least half its tenants have already stayed ten years or longer. Brooklyn's Fifth Avenue Committee reports "almost no turnover." As with all public and subsidized housing, CDCs place no time limit on how long one can retain one's subsidy after initially qualifying. Indeed, subsidized rent can seduce even ambitious tenants to limit their impulse toward self-improvement. At one Urban Edge property, I met two women, board members of the organization, who both said that, had their building not been renovated—allowing them to live in an upgraded apartment at low rent—they would have gone out and bought their own homes.

Even apart from their stable-neighborhood ideology, CDCs have a financial incentive not to urge their tenants to move up and out. They need the poor, and the generous subsidized rents they bring with them, to pay their own bills. When Urban Edge recently completed a new building, for instance, it couldn't find enough qualified or interested potential tenants in its immediate neighborhood. So the organization—officially dedicated to neighborhood comeback—imported poor tenants, primarily single mothers, from other, poorer parts of the city. Here is a dismal underside to the CDC story: the finances of their projects depend on there always being a stream of poor, subsidized households.

Incredibly, CDC financing arrangements explicitly assume a steady supply of such households. Massachusetts, for instance, continues to build subsidized housing in Boston based on the following logic: because 32 percent of the city's households are low-income, the state should continue to support subsidized housing construction until 32 percent of all Boston units are "affordable." (The current figure is over 20 percent.) Thus the state officially does not foresee the possibility of upward mobility. It assumes a static economy, in which cities are not starting points for ambitious strivers of modest means but long-term poorhouses.

This construction of stealth public housing is not only bad for the poor but is also a sure way to inhibit a real comeback in older city neighborhoods. Cities bounce back when decline makes their land so cheap that it becomes economic for businesses to buy. CDCs claim, on the contrary, that it is their housing activities that set the stage for growth, attracting subsequent private investment. But Harvard University social scientist Sara Stoutland has found that "there is no hard evidence of such a widespread 'spillover effect.' " In fact, the "spillover effects" of CDCs are much more likely to be negative than positive, hindering urban economic revival. To take one example out of thousands upon thousands, a fledgling Internet-related firm called Virtual Access Networks recently decided to build its new corporate headquarters in the depressed mill town of Lawrence, Massachusetts—a place in the mold of Bridgeport, Camden, or Buffalo. Why Lawrence? The firm says it looked for the least expensive space that was most convenient for the largest number of its employees. Lawrence should count itself fortunate that some CDC had not beaten Virtual Access Networks to the site and turned it into more housing for the poor—housing that the struggling city already has in superabundance.

The non-housing activities of CDCs also have a way of backfiring economically. Some 700 CDCs nationwide own and operate nonprofit businesses, on the assumption that, since the larger economic system keeps the poor permanently poor, they must be cared for in a separate, "compassionate," non-capitalist economy. In this spirit, Brooklyn's Fifth Avenue Committee operates Ecomat Cleaners, "an environmentally friendly solution to toxic dry cleaning," with ten employees—and an annual loss, subsidized by foundations and by housing-related income. Occasionally, such subsidized ventures have proven disastrous. In Indianapolis, Eastside Investments, a CDC once held up as a national exemplar, effectively went bankrupt—shrinking from 80 employees to four—largely as the result of costs associated with a business it started. Here was the separate economy with a vengeance: Eastside was going to manufacture building materials for use in its own subsidized housing projects. The factory would provide employment for the people living in its units. Instead, the CDC lost $800,000 on "Shelter Systems." But the fundamental problem with all such enterprises lies in their conception, not their performance. During a period in which unemployment hit historical lows, CDCs continued to operate on the assumption that it was necessary to develop an alternative, nonprofit economy to shelter the poor, much like sheltered workshops for the blind or retarded.

CDCs often manage their other non-housing economic-development activities poorly, too, including their business of renting commercial space to for-profit firms. The director of a Central Harlem credit union, for instance, complains that a nearby CDC has left a block of storefronts empty and boarded up. He suspects that their housing development provides such a reliable level of income with relatively little effort that, he says, they "don't want the hassle" of finding commercial tenants.

But without a doubt, CDCs have also been able to recruit some successful for-profit businesses to their neighborhoods. It's great to see a new Key Foods across from the Fifth Avenue Committee office and a new McDonald's in the mini-mall built and leased by Urban Edge in Boston. But one must ask the question: why are such intermediaries necessary for inner-city development when they are unneeded in the broader, commercial economy? If land is available, zoning flexible, and permits easy to get, if there is unmet demand for a new supermarket or restaurant, and if police are doing their job of allowing business owners to operate safely, business will take root as it does anywhere else. Indeed, right nearby the McDonald's that Urban Edge recruited to Roxbury, two major national drugstore chains, Walgreen's and CVS, opened new stores without any help from a CDC.

It is only in the context of the protest politics so often found in inner-city neighborhoods—the knee-jerk response against chain stores or outsiders—that CDCs make sense. They provide the means for investors to buy entrée and community support. Urban Edge, for instance, only agreed to rent a storefront to McDonald's if the fast-food giant signed a lease agreeing to share profits with the CDC—even though the store was on land leased by the state to Urban Edge at minimal cost. Says Urban Edge executive director Mossik Hacobian: "Why should we let profits generated by our community make someone in Chicago rich? We think at least some of that money should go to the community itself." The arbiter of how that money should be used is, of course, Urban Edge—although, concedes Hacobian, there is nothing in the agreement with McDonald's that specifies exactly how the money will improve the community. (Urban Edge says it has used the funds to build premises it rents to a Boys and Girls Club.) Moreover, this vision overlooks a great many things—not only the fact that McDonald's is a public corporation in which Roxbury residents (through pension funds, for instance) might actually have a stake, but the fact that McDonald's already supports the community the old-fashioned way, by providing a needed service and needed jobs, and paying property taxes.

Of course, elected officials accountable to the voters oversee the spending of those taxes, but to whom are CDCs accountable? Although these organizations are nominally under the control of boards of directors that include community residents, neighborhoods as a whole have no formal means to oversee or direct them. In fact, occasionally a CDC will explicitly ignore what it takes to be the majority view in a neighborhood. The Fifth Avenue Committee—which has grown from eight employees in 1992 to 40 today—decided last year against neighborhood-based elections for its board of directors. Board members feared, in part, that newcomers from middle-class Park Slope might take over the organization and move it off its mission, which includes "combating displacement caused by gentrification." The fear was that residents might instead work for standard neighborhood improvements, such as better parks and schools. Instead of permitting an open election, Fifth Avenue Committee bylaws actually dictate specific racial and income quotas on its board. "At all times, a majority of the board members will be people of color. At all times, a majority of board members will be people who currently are or at some time in the past have been low-income. At least 30 percent of the board will be people who are currently low-income."

How can an outfit with "community" in its name get away with excluding certain classes of local residents? The Fifth Avenue Committee's director of community organizing candidly puts it this way: "There is a very small subset of funders that is concerned about accountability issues. Most other funders just sort of like us because we're a CDC. By definition, we do good things, and that's good enough for them."

Foundation funders believe that they are supporting projects conceived and refined by low-income community residents. In reality, CDC directors are middle-class professionals. The Fifth Avenue Committee and Urban Edge both have office staffs dominated by local residents—mostly black and Hispanic—but both are run by white professionals with degrees from elite universities. Judging by the attendance at the NCCED Washington convention, many black professionals hold

CDC executive jobs, too; this seems to be another quasi-public-sector career path that attracts capable African-Americans, already so overrepresented in the public sector.

But the lack of neighborhood oversight and strong outside board members can also lead to the old War on Poverty problem: corruption. Banana Kelly—founded in 1978 with the quintessential CDC motto: "Don't Move, Improve"—is the poster child here, its financial records subpoenaed by the New York State attorney general and one of its employees reportedly interviewed by the FBI and the New York City Department of Investigation. Writes the *New York Times*: Banana Kelly's "finances have become chaotic. Some board members and former employees have raised questions about how government money was used and about the form in which [chairwoman Yolanda Rivera] is compensated." With the organization so cash-strapped that its offices lacked toilet paper, the *Times* reported, chairwoman Rivera used "part of the organization's dwindling resources—what she calls general, or unrestricted funds—to pay for travel, including a trip to a conference in Kenya for her and several associates."

CDC advocates continually imply that theirs is a true volunteer movement—"a uniquely American force in the best traditions of the social and economic institutions observed by Alexis de Tocqueville in early-nineteenth-century communities," as the NCCED puts it. Yet among themselves, CDC advocates acknowledge that subsidized building renovation does not inherently create Tocquevillian ties that bind. Hence they have hatched the so-called community building movement, which seeks self-consciously to construct the neighborhood structures—block clubs, crime watches, recreation leagues—that arise spontaneously in neighborhoods where residents pay their own rent or mortgage and feel real responsibility for their environs. The community building of the CDC world attempts to professionalize all that—to use hired organizers and paid advocates as substitutes for Tocquevillian community institutions.

Congressional Republicans have fallen for CDCs hook, line, and sinker. In the waning days of the Clinton administration, the Republican Congress hugely pumped up the key engine of the CDC explosion, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, from $1.25 per capita per state to $1.50 for 2001, $1.75 for 2002—and indexed to inflation for subsequent years. CDCs are salivating at such new federal pots as the "New Markets Initiative"—a subsidized tax-credit-supported approach to commercial development. As the LISC web site puts it, ominously: "The New Markets Tax Credit promises to be as valuable for community-sponsored economic development as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit has been for rental housing development." If it brings the same sort of investment based not on assessment of markets but, instead, on brownie points for various kinds of "social responsibility," this is bad news for cities, where good policing has already sparked commercial development in poor neighborhoods. Further bad news is *Comeback Cities* author Grogan's recent formation of a group called CEOs for Cities, which seeks increased support of businessmen for CDC subsidy schemes.

"'Most funders just like us because we're a CDC. By definition, we do good things, and that's good enough for them.'"

Instead of falling for such stuff, Congress and the Bush administration should begin doing everything they can do to bring inner-city neighborhoods into the mainstream economy. They should put time limits on the Section 8 rental vouchers that are the CDCs' lifeblood, and so try to weaken the movement. And they should encourage and help cities to spark revival the old-fashioned ways: by providing safe streets, effective schools, attractive parks, and work-oriented, values-laden social programs. Cities must help themselves, too, by controlling costs, lowering taxes, minimizing regulation, and encouraging private housing and commercial development. Shortcuts like CDCs are doomed to be dead ends.

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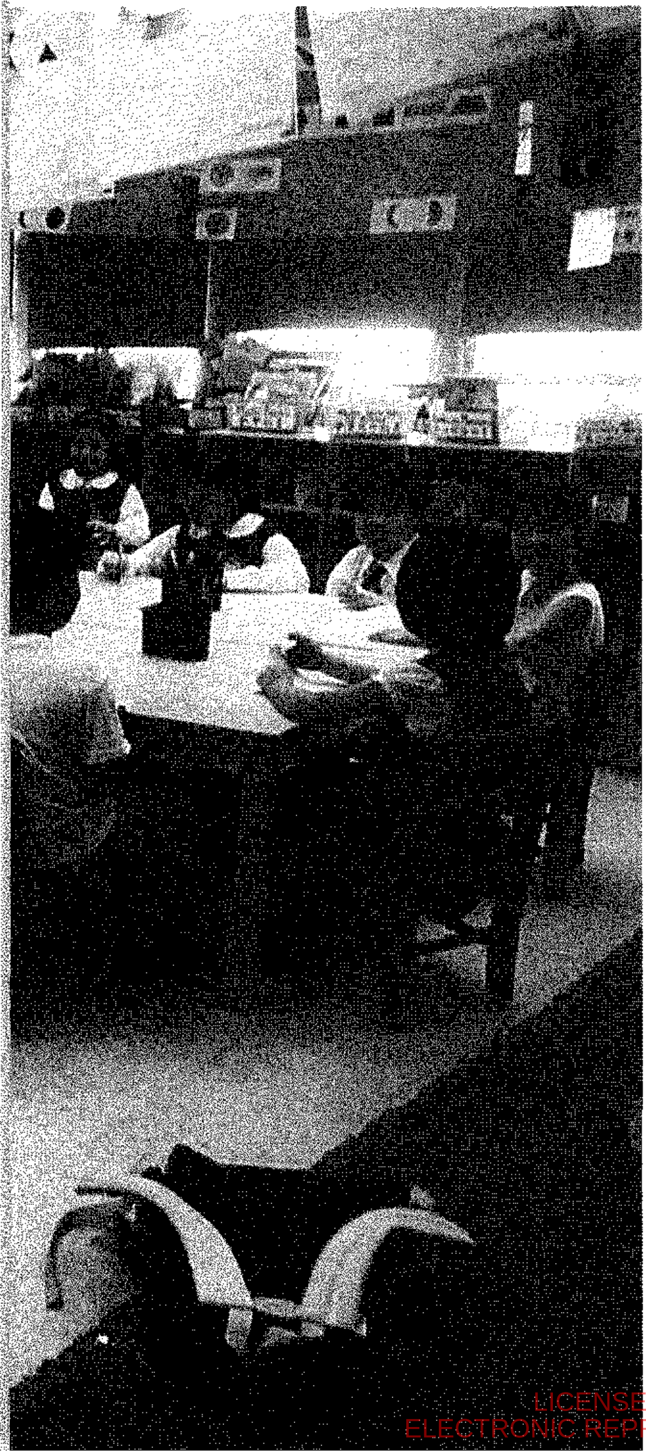
Why Merit Pay Will Improve Teaching



FRANCES M. ROBERTS

Why not reward teachers who run classrooms as cheerful, orderly, and busy as this one in New York?

Steven Malanga

One of the bitterest controversies in today's school-reform debate is merit pay—rewarding teachers not for seniority and the number of ed-school credits they've piled up, as public schools have done since the early 1920s, but for what they actually achieve in the classroom. Education reformers argue that merit pay will give encouragement to good teachers and drive away bad ones, and thus improve under-performing public schools. But most teachers' unions adamantly oppose the idea. We don't have reliable means to measure a teacher's classroom performance, the unions charge, so merit plans will inevitably result in supervisor bias and favoritism: "Just too many cliques in the system," one teacher typically complains in a recent survey.

Nowhere is the incentives debate raging more fiercely than in New York City, where teachers' contract negotiations have been at an impasse for months. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has demanded that merit pay for individual teachers be part of any deal; the teachers' union response (at least so far): fuhgeddaboudit.

Private industry shows the power of giving employees credit where credit is due.

Missing from the argument, though, are lessons from the private sector, where sophisticated, effective performance-based compensation has been *de rigueur* since the 1980s—part and parcel, experts believe, of corporate America's hugely successful restructuring. Also ignored are experiments with comprehensive merit-pay plans that are under way in a few innovative school districts across the country—districts burdened with much less political resistance than Gotham.

To get a sense of what merit pay could do for the public schools, consider the benefits it has showered on American industry over the last two decades. Before the eighties, merit pay in U.S. firms—if it existed at all—was pretty simple: the boss gave you a fat bonus if you (or your unit) met sales or production goals. But as international economic competition pummeled them in the early 1980s, U.S. corporations, desperate to regain their competitiveness, began to experiment with measuring individual worker performance. They establishing pay incentives to improve it in formerly hard-to-measure categories of output and in previously intangible areas like customer service or product quality. Of course, the bottom line was still the bottom line, but these intangibles, companies now reasoned, mattered to the long-term economic health of the firm, even if they didn't show up right away in the quarter-by-quarter numbers.

Familiar today, the new performance criteria—and the multi-faceted compensation plans built on their foundation—were strikingly original at the time. Retailers hired "mystery" shoppers to check out how employees treated customers, and based salaries, in part, on what they found. Businesses built into sales contracts "integrity" clauses that gauged not just how many widgets an employee sold but how long clients stuck with him. Banks remunerated loan officers not just for the lending they brought in but for the long-term quality of their loan portfolios. Some auto dealers tied part of salesmen's pay to how customers rated them in follow-up surveys. Companies combined these kinds of individualized incentives with rewards for everybody if the whole firm did well. Airlines, for example, gave the entire crew bonuses if the fleet's on-time performance improved.

Predictably, when U.S. businesses first introduced these innovations, workers grumbled, especially in heavily unionized industries like auto manufacturing, where any change threatened cushy labor arrangements. "They said that you couldn't measure some things, that the pay systems were too subjective, that supervisors were too subjective—in short, everything that teachers today are saying," observes Alan Johnson, a New York-based compensation consultant. Many efforts stumbled at first, too, and companies had to discard or overhaul them. Creating effective programs, it became clear, would not be an overnight fix. "Even today, with all we know, it takes three years to start up an effective incentive-pay program," cautions Martha Glantz, a compensation expert with Buck Consultants in Manhattan. "You can spend the first year just deciding what the company's goals and missions are, and collecting the data."

But American firms, needing to change or perish, forged ahead, winning over employees who liked the challenge of incentive pay and, through trial and error, developing pay plans that worked. By the mid-1990s, half of all major American corporations used such incentives. "It's no longer credible to say you can't measure something or that the only thing you can measure is a simple output," says Johnson. Merit pay played a crucial role, most observers believe, in generating the zooming productivity gains and superior product quality that American firms began recording in the late 1980s and that have been central to the nation's economic prosperity ever since.

The public education monopoly has long resisted merit pay with the same ferocity with which private-sector workers at first greeted it. Opponents have constantly invoked previous attempts that failed—though their only examples have been two experiments that are over 100 years old, and another from the 1960s, before modern notions of performance pay emerged. The conventional wisdom among educators had long been that any attempt to pin down exactly what makes for good teaching, let alone measure and reward it fairly, was doomed to fail. "There was a general feeling that you were either gifted as a teacher or you weren't, and that good teaching wasn't something you could define," says Charlotte Danielson, an expert on teaching at the Educational Testing Service in New Jersey. As a last-ditch defense, some educators even argued that factors outside school, especially a student's socioeconomic and family situation, had a much greater impact on student performance than teachers did, so that using merit pay based on student performance to promote good teaching, even if it could be defined, wasn't fair. The unasked question was why teachers should ever receive salary hikes if what they do doesn't matter.

Over the last decade, these views have utterly collapsed, undermining the intellectual case—weak as it was—against merit pay. A key figure has been University of Tennessee statistician William Sanders, who discovered how to measure a teacher's effect on student performance. Rather than try to filter out the myriad sociological influences on pupils, a nearly impossible task, Sanders used complex statistical methods to chart the progress of students against themselves over the course of a school year and measure how much "value" different teachers added. Now called the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System, Sanders's approach proved what every parent already knew: not only did teachers matter, but some were lots better than others. Other education experts, including Danielson, author of several popular books on pedagogy, developed widely accepted criteria to judge good teaching, which put paid to the absurd notion that it was too elusive to define.

> **"Merit pay was crucial in generating the zooming productivity gains U.S. firms began recording in the late 1980s."**

If the 1990s helped re-establish the centrality of teaching in the education debate, however, that victory hasn't melted away the teachers' unions' political opposition to merit pay. Even so, a small number of school systems across the country, under intense pressure from parents, politicians, and administrators to improve student performance, have turned to merit pay to promote better teaching. And, after some give-and-take, they've managed to get the teachers' unions on board.

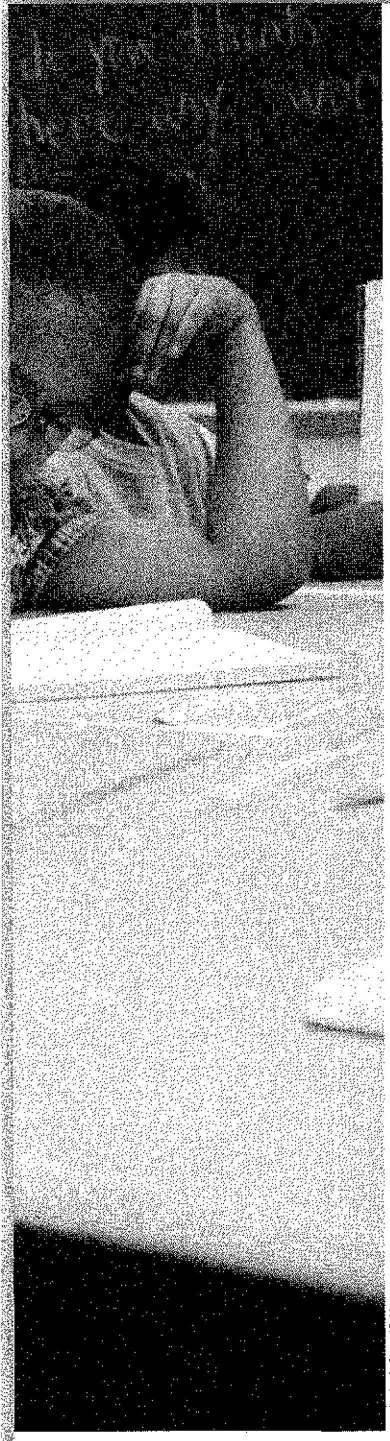
Cincinnati's public school system, the first to experiment with performance incentives, persuaded its teachers' union in 1997 to do a test run of merit pay. Two years later, a ten-school pilot program, designed by administrators and teachers, got under way. Essential to union support was the pilot's proposed use of peers to evaluate teachers. "The peer evaluators, who have no stake in how teachers are judged, are important to the perception of the fairness of the system," observes Kathleen Ware, associate superintendent of Cincinnati schools. Using Danielson's criteria of good teaching—they include class preparation and clarity of presentation—the principals and peer evaluators devoted 20 to 30 hours to assessing every teacher in the ten chosen schools. Based on how they scored, teachers then wound up in one of five salary categories, with "novices" making the least money and "accomplished" teachers the most.

The pilot proved successful. A majority of teachers involved found it fair and judged the standards used as appropriate for the whole school district. The city's board of education adopted it in the spring of 2000, and, in a subsequent election, union members signed on. Teachers will go through evaluations every five years, though those looking to move up quickly can request an appraisal after just two years. New teachers and one-fifth of all experienced teachers are having evaluations done this year, but no one will start getting paid under the new system until 2002.

Unfortunately, Cincinnati's new program doesn't directly use student test scores in its evaluations. Bringing in scores would have generated too much union hostility for the plan to gain acceptance, reports school superintendent Steven Adamowski. And in all likelihood, tying pay *solely* to test scores is a bad idea; nobody would call meritorious a teacher who boosted scores but left his students psychological wrecks because of his bullying. Yet leaving tests out altogether also makes no sense. After all, what better way to determine how well students are doing—the only reason for the concern over teaching quality in the first place—than test scores? Cincinnati's program recognizes this implicitly. The district will monitor test results of students whose teachers score the highest ratings. If those students don't show substantial improvement, school officials will toughen the program's standards. In addition, the district will rely on student tests to award bonuses to all teachers in a school whose kids take big strides.

A merit-pay system should consider student performance and peer evaluation of teacher skills.

One major benefit of merit systems is that they enable schools to pay teachers—especially young and ambitious teachers—fatter salaries. That's the overriding rationale behind Iowa's new incentives program, enacted by the state legislature to keep better-paying nearby states from spiriting away top teachers. The state has anted up $40 million for salary increases, but, in a program similar to Cincinnati's, Iowa will now evaluate teachers thoroughly to make sure the extra dough goes only to the good classroom performers, not the duds. "We believe this system will help us retain the best people by re-professionalizing teaching," enthuses John Forsyth, chief executive of the Des Moines–based Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Forsyth helped the state dream up the new system, looking to the market for inspiration. "We know good teachers make a difference," he continues, "and we're



RICHARD B. LEVINE

going to pay those who do make a difference." How much more reasonable this is than the New York union's claim that, because a few city teachers jump to higher-paying suburban schools each year, all teachers—the good and the bad alike—need equal raises to make them stay.

In Iowa's new system, good teachers will now be able to reach higher salary levels much earlier in their careers than before. "The private pay consultants who looked at our old seniority system thought it must have been designed specifically to keep teacher pay low and save school districts money," says Ted Stilwill, director of Iowa's Department of Education. "The only way for teachers to get paid more under that system was for them to stick it out for years." As in Cincinnati, union opposition means that Iowa won't rely on test scores to evaluate teachers—at least not directly. But in addition to paying teachers based on their performance evaluations, the state will also offer modest yearly bonuses to all teachers in a school whose students do well on standardized tests, with the biggest bonuses going to the school's best instructors, rather than all teachers getting equal rewards.

Helping to develop Iowa's plan has been an eye-opener for the state's education chief. "Private-sector compensation experts taught me that businesses use pay as a way of getting everyone to follow common goals," Stilwill says. "Being in the public sector most of my life, I never understood that."

Though Cincinnati and Iowa have skirted the controversy of using student test scores, Denver is confronting it head-on. The city has launched two pilot plans that link pay directly to scores. One pilot program uses student scores in standardized tests of basic skills; another relies on scores in specific subjects. Principals and teachers agree at the beginning of the school year on what kinds of improvements in test scores they'll shoot for and then face evaluation at the end of the year to see if they've met their goals. Denver is also instituting a third merit-pay pilot program that instructs teachers in the principles of good teaching and then evaluates their teaching skills and rewards them accordingly. Denver will later measure how their students perform on tests to see if its criteria for good teaching really produce results. Through these experiments, Denver hopes to figure out what motivates teachers best and what works best for students.

Denver's teachers' union, surprisingly, has contributed mightily to developing the pilots; the head of the project's design team, Brad Jupp, is a union negotiator. He says the union is participating because the demand to make schools more accountable is so intense that teachers would rather help create performance systems than have them imposed from above. "If you believe that your union members are doing a good job—and we do—then you want a system that accurately measures that," says Jupp.

Experiences from the private sector suggest that it will take several years before these imaginative programs work out all their kinks. In the meantime, controversy will dog the new programs. Critics will pounce on their every mistake as evidence that paying teachers for performance is a bad idea. And unions are likely to push for watered-down plans in order to deflect criticism without giving up too much.

This last is exactly what's happening in New York. The teachers' union has offered the mayor a compromise: pay *every* teacher in a school or district a bonus if the school's or district's test scores rise. A trial run of such a system, supported by Gotham's business community, is under way in two urban districts; other states, including California and Georgia, already have school-based bonuses.

But group bonuses will never substitute adequately for true performance pay, compensation experts believe, since they don't single out good and bad teachers. All they're likely to do is to frustrate first-rate teachers working in schools with mediocre staffs. "If you have four workers doing well in a unit that is not otherwise performing, over time those four will leave the company and go somewhere that they can be rewarded for their superior work," says consultant Glantz. And since schoolwide bonuses don't put any pay at risk—poor performance doesn't mean less money—they won't help rid schools of lousy teachers either. By contrast, teachers who score poorly in, say, Cincinnati, now find themselves shunted into the lowest salary level, discouraging them from sticking around. Mayor Giuliani, rightly, has rejected the union's offer.

Of course, smaller cities like Cincinnati are far removed from the we-don't-do-windows union obstructionism of a New York or a Los Angeles. For 15 years, Cincinnati's teachers' union has accepted some kind of peer evaluation of teachers; it's easily one of the nation's most flexible teachers' unions. Unions in New York and Los Angeles, conversely, have fought almost every education reform tooth and nail. Last year in Los Angeles, thousands of teachers ferociously protested against a proposed merit-pay plan, eventually killing it. Moreover, in the current public school monopoly, there's nothing really comparable to the outside economic pressure that forced American industry to develop its merit programs—one more argument for school choice.

Without individualized merit pay, teacher evaluations will remain perfunctory at best. Today, New York principals fail less than 1 percent of all teachers in annual evaluations. New York hopes to get principals to crack down on bad teaching by rewarding them financially when their schools do well. That will eliminate one of the main objections to teacher merit pay—that it leads to supervisor favoritism: even if a principal hates an effective teacher's guts, he's not going to want to lose someone who's helping him sweeten his own salary. But until teachers are part of any performance-pay system, the impact of such innovations will be severely limited—and students will continue to get shortchanged, regardless of how much their teachers take to the bank. ■

Merit Pay in Private Schools

Of private schools of the kind that New York City schools chancellor Harold Levy and a significant number of public school teachers send their kids to, roughly half have long-standing merit-pay systems. So many of the rest are experimenting with various forms of merit pay, says Patrick Bassett, president of the Independent Schools Association of the Central States, that "compensation is becoming one of the hottest issues in private schools."

In the schools with full-fledged merit pay, including many of the nation's top private schools, the principal and the board of trustees simply negotiate salaries with teachers, offering fatter deals to better instructors. Among the schools that use set pay scales, some institutions, such as the Louisville Collegiate School in Kentucky, have turned to "broad-banding" salaries—establishing pay scales that give administrators wide latitude to set pay, without abandoning scales entirely. A school that paid novice teachers $30,000 in the past would, after converting to broad-banding, pay them anywhere from $25,000 to $35,000, depending on how they perform or how many school-related tasks they take on. The Rohan Woods School in St. Louis offers another model in giving raises to teachers. It bases one-third of the salary increase on individual performance, and the other two-thirds on how well the school as a whole did on standardized tests and on cost-of-living adjustments.

Many schools are experimenting with evaluation criteria too. One growing trend, borrowed from the private sector, is the 360-degree evaluation. Supervisors, peers, and parents will all assess a teacher, giving schools a clearer understanding of his or her value.

"As the shortage of teachers grows in the country, it's being felt by private schools too," says Bassett, "so they are looking for ways to reward their best teachers."

Urbanities

How—and How Not—to Love Mankind

Theodore Dalrymple

Almost every intellectual claims to have the welfare of humanity, and particularly the welfare of the poor, at heart: but since no mass murder takes place without its perpetrators alleging that they are acting for the good of mankind, philanthropic sentiment can plainly take a multiplicity of forms.

Two great European writers of the nineteenth century, Ivan Turgenev and Karl Marx, illustrate this diversity with vivid clarity. Both were born in 1818 and died in 1883, and their lives paralleled each other almost preternaturally in many other respects as well. They nevertheless came to view human life and suffering in very different, indeed irreconcilable, ways—through different ends of the telescope, as it were. Turgenev saw human beings as individuals always endowed with consciousness, character, feelings, and moral strengths and weaknesses; Marx saw them always as snowflakes in an avalanche, as instances of general forces, as not yet fully human because utterly conditioned by their circumstances. Where Turgenev saw men, Marx saw classes of men; where Turgenev saw people, Marx saw the People. These two ways of looking at the world persist into our own time and profoundly affect, for better or for worse, the solutions we propose to our social problems.

The resemblances between the careers of these men begin with their attendance at Berlin University at overlapping times, where both were deeply affected—even intoxicated—by the prevailing Hegelianism. As a result, both considered careers as university teachers of philosophy, but neither ever held a university post. They had many acquaintances in common in Berlin, including Mikhail Bakunin, the Russian aristocrat who later became a revolutionary anarchist, the philosopher Bruno Bauer, and the radical poet Georg Herwegh. They shared a carelessness with money, perhaps because they were both born into easy circumstances and therefore assumed that money would never be a problem. Both started their writing careers as romantic poets, though more of Turgenev's poetry than Marx's was published.

Their literary influences and tastes were similar. Each read widely in the Greek and Latin classics; each could quote Shakespeare in the original. Both learned Spanish in order to read Calderón. (Turgenev, of course, also learned it to speak the native language of the great, but unsatisfactory, love of his life, the famous prima donna Pauline Viardot.) The two men were in Brussels at the outbreak of the 1848 revolution against the July monarchy in France, and both left to observe the events elsewhere. Turgenev's closest Russian friend, Pavel Annenkov, to whom he dedicated some of his work, knew Marx well in Brussels—and left an unflattering description of him.

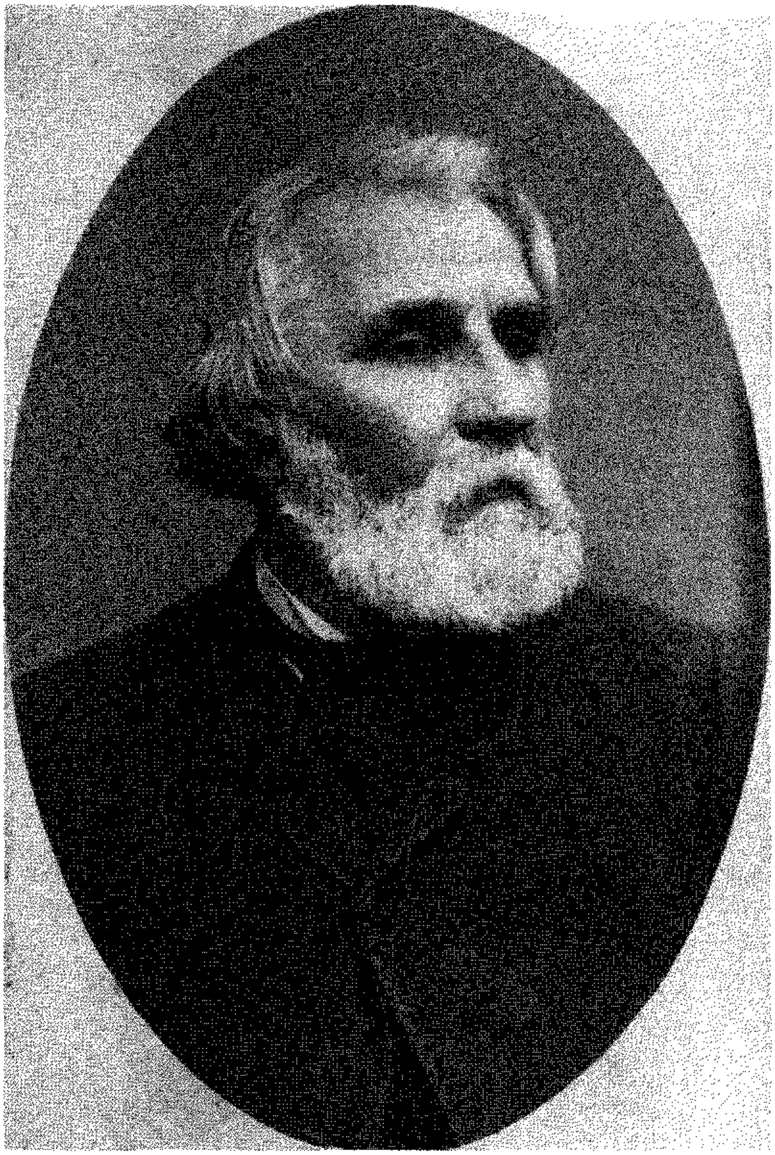
The secret police spied upon both men, and both lived most of their adult lives, and died, in exile. Each fathered a child by a servant: a youthful indiscretion in Turgenev's case, a middle-aged one in Marx's. Unlike Marx, however, Turgenev acknowledged his child and paid for her upbringing.

Both men were known for their sympathy with the downtrodden and oppressed. But for all their similarities of education and experience, the quality of each man's compassion could not have been more different: for while one's, rooted in the suffering of individuals, was real, the other's, abstract and general, was not.

To see the difference, contrast Turgenev's 1852 story "Mumu" with Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, written four years earlier. Both works, almost exactly equal in length, took shape in difficult circumstances: Marx, expelled from France for revolutionary activity, was residing in Brussels, where he had no wish to be and no income, while Turgenev was under house arrest at Spasskoye, his isolated estate southwest of Moscow, for having written his *Sketches from a Hunter's Album*, an implicitly anti-serfdom—and therefore subversive—book. The censor who allowed it to be published was dismissed and stripped of his pension.

"Mumu" is set in Moscow in the days of serfdom. Gerasim is a deaf and dumb serf of enormous stature and strength, whose owner, an old and tyrannical feudal landowner, has had him brought to the city from the countryside. Unable to express himself in words, Gerasim clumsily woos a peasant girl called Tatyana, also owned by the landowner. On a whim, however, the landowner, a

Urbanities



J & L ALLGEYER/ARCHIVE PHOTOS

Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883)

sour and embittered widow who is never named, decides to marry Tatyana off to another of her serfs, a drunken cobbler called Kapiton, thus dashing Gerasim's hopes.

Not long after, Gerasim finds a young puppy drowning in a muddy creek. He rescues her and looks after her until she is a healthy, full-grown dog. He calls her Mumu, the nearest he can come to articulating a word, and everyone in the landowner's Moscow establishment soon knows the dog by that name. Gerasim grows passionately fond of the dog, his only true friend, whom he allows to live with him in his little room, and who follows him everywhere. The dog adores Gerasim.

One day the landowner sees Mumu through the window and asks for the dog to be brought to her. But Mumu is afraid of the landowner and bares her teeth to her. The landowner instantly conceives a dislike of the dog and demands that she be gotten rid of. One of the landowner's servants takes the dog away and sells it to a stranger. Gerasim searches for Mumu frantically but fails to find her. However, Mumu finds her way back to him, to his overwhelming joy.

Unfortunately, Mumu barks on the following night and wakes the landowner, who believes herself to be sorely tried by this interruption of her sleep. She demands that the dog, this time, be destroyed. Her servants go to Gerasim and, by means of signs, pass on her demand. Gerasim, recognizing the inevitable, promises to destroy the dog himself.

There follow two passages of almost unbearable pathos. In the first, Gerasim takes Mumu to the local tavern: "In the tavern they knew Gerasim and understood his sign language. He ordered cabbage soup and meat and sat down with his arms on the table. Mumu stood beside his chair, looking at him calmly with her intelligent eyes. Her coat literally shone: clearly she had only recently been combed. They brought Gerasim his cabbage soup. He broke some bread into it, cut up the meat into small pieces and set the bowl down on the floor. Mumu started eating with her customary delicacy, her muzzle hardly touching the food. Gerasim studied her for a long time; two heavy tears rolled suddenly out of his eyes: one fell on the dog's forehead, the other into the soup. He covered his face with his hand. Mumu ate half the bowl and walked away licking herself. Gerasim stood up, paid for the soup and left."

He takes Mumu down to the river, picking up a couple of bricks en route. At the riverbank, he gets into a boat with Mumu and rows out some distance.

"Finally Gerasim sat up straight, hurriedly, with a look of sickly bitterness on his face, tied the bricks together with string, made a noose, placed it round Mumu's neck, lifted her over the river, looked at her for the last time. . . . Trustingly and without fear she looked at him and slightly wagged her tail. He turned away, grimaced and let go. . . . Gerasim heard nothing, neither the whining of the falling Mumu, nor the heavy splash in the water; for him the noisiest day was still and soundless, as not even the quietest night can be soundless for us; and when he again opened his eyes the little waves were as ever hurrying along the river's surface, as if racing after each other, as ever they rippled against the sides of the boat, and only far behind one or two broad rings rippled towards the bank."

We learn that after Mumu's death Gerasim runs away back to his village, where he works like a slave in the fields: but never again does he form a close attachment to man or dog.

When the cultivated, aristocratic, revolutionary Russian exile Alexander Herzen read the story, he trembled with rage. Thomas Carlyle said it was the most emotionally affecting story he had ever read. John Galsworthy said of it that "no more stirring protest against tyrannical cruelty was ever penned." And one of Turgenev's relatives, to whom the author read "Mumu," wrote afterward, "What a humane and good man one must be to understand and give expression to the experience and torments of another's heart in that way!"

The story is autobiographical, and the tyrannical, captious, arbitrary, and selfish landowner is the author's mother, Varvara Petrovna Turgeneva. Widowed early, she was an absolute monarch on her estate. Many stories have come down to us of her cruelty, though not all have been authenticated: for example, that she had two serfs sent to Siberia for having failed to make their obeisances to her as she passed—because they did not see her. And the model for Gerasim was a deaf and dumb serf belonging to Varvara Petrovna called Andrei.

Clearly "Mumu" is an impassioned protest against the exercise of arbitrary power of one person over another, but it is not politically schematic. Though it is obviously directed against serfdom, the story does not suggest that cruelty is the prerogative of feudal landowners alone, and that if only serfdom were abolished, no vigilance against such cruelty would be necessary. If power is a permanent feature of human relationships—and surely only adolescents and certain kinds of intellectuals, Marx included, could imagine that it is not—then "Mumu" is a permanent call to compassion, restraint, and justice in its exercise. That is why "Mumu" does not lose its power to move 140 years after the abolition of serfdom in Russia; while it refers to a particular place at a particular time, it is also universal.

In making his general point, Turgenev does not suggest that his characters are anything but individuals, with their own personal characteristics. He does not see them just as members of a group or class, caused by oppression to act in predetermined ways like trams along their rails: and his careful observation of even the humblest of them is the most powerful testimony possible to his belief in their humanity. Grand aristocrat that he was, and acquainted with the greatest minds of Europe, he did not disdain to take seriously the humblest peasant, who could not hear or speak. Turgenev's oppressed peasants were fully human beings, endowed with free will and capable of moral choice.

He contrasts Gerasim's tenderness toward Mumu with the landowner's selfish fractiousness. "Why should that dumb man have a dog?" she asks, without the thought entering her head for a moment that "that dumb man" might have interests and feelings of his own. "Who allowed him to keep a dog out in my yard?"

Turgenev does not suggest that the landowning widow's quasi-absolute power is in any way enviable. Although religious in a superficial and sententious way, she regards God as a servant, not a master, and she acknowledges no limits, either God's or the law's, to the exercise of her will. The result for her is misery, a permanent state of irritation, dissatisfaction, and hypochondria. The satisfaction of her whims brings no pleasure, precisely because they are whims rather than true desires; and—used as she is to obedience, and deserving of it as she believes herself to be—she experiences all resistance, even that of time, as intolerable.

For example, when Mumu is brought in, the landowner talks to her in a syrupy, ingratiating manner; but when the dog fails to respond, she changes her tune. "Take her away! A disgusting little dog!" Unlike Gerasim, who has nurtured Mumu with tender devotion, the landowner wants the dog to love her immediately, just because she is who she is.

Her power renders her dishonest and incapable of introspection. When Gerasim disappears after drowning Mumu, "she flew into a temper, shed tears, ordered him to be found no matter what happened, avowed that she'd never ordered the dog to be destroyed and finally gave [her steward] a dressing down." Her denial of responsibility is breathtaking. Power corrupts, Turgenev knows; and the failure to accept any limitation to one's thoughtless wishes makes happiness impossible. But no set of social arrangements, he understands, will eliminate these dangers altogether.

Nor does Turgenev believe that the people who are subject to the power of the landowner are, by virtue of their oppression, noble. They are scheming and conniving and sometimes thoughtlessly cruel, too. Their mockery of Gerasim is limited only by their fear of his physical strength, and they do not sympathize in the least with his predicament. When Gavrila, the landowner's steward, goes at the head of a delegation of serfs to tell Gerasim that he must get rid of Mumu once and for all, he bangs on Gerasim's door and shouts "'Open up!' There came the sound of smothered barking; but no answer. 'I'm telling you to open up!' he repeated.

"'Gavrila Andreich,' remarked Stepan from below, 'he's deaf, he doesn't hear.' Everyone burst out laughing."

There is no compassion in their laughter, not then and not at any other time in the story. Cruelty is not the province only of the landowner, and the heartlessness of the serfs toward Gerasim always reminds me of a scene from my childhood, when I was about 11 years old. I had gone to line up for tickets to a soccer match—in those days, for reasons I can no longer recapture, I was enthusiastic about the game. The line was long, and there was at least a two-hour wait. An old blind man with an accordion passed along the line, singing "The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo," while a companion held out a cap for alms. They passed some young working-class men who had a radio, and who turned the volume up to drown out his song. They laughed loudly at his bewilderment as his companion led him away, reduced to silence.

No one intervened or told the young men how abominably they had behaved; I was too cowardly to do so. But in that little scene, I saw man's permanent capacity for inhumanity to man, a capacity that transcends social condition, class, or education.

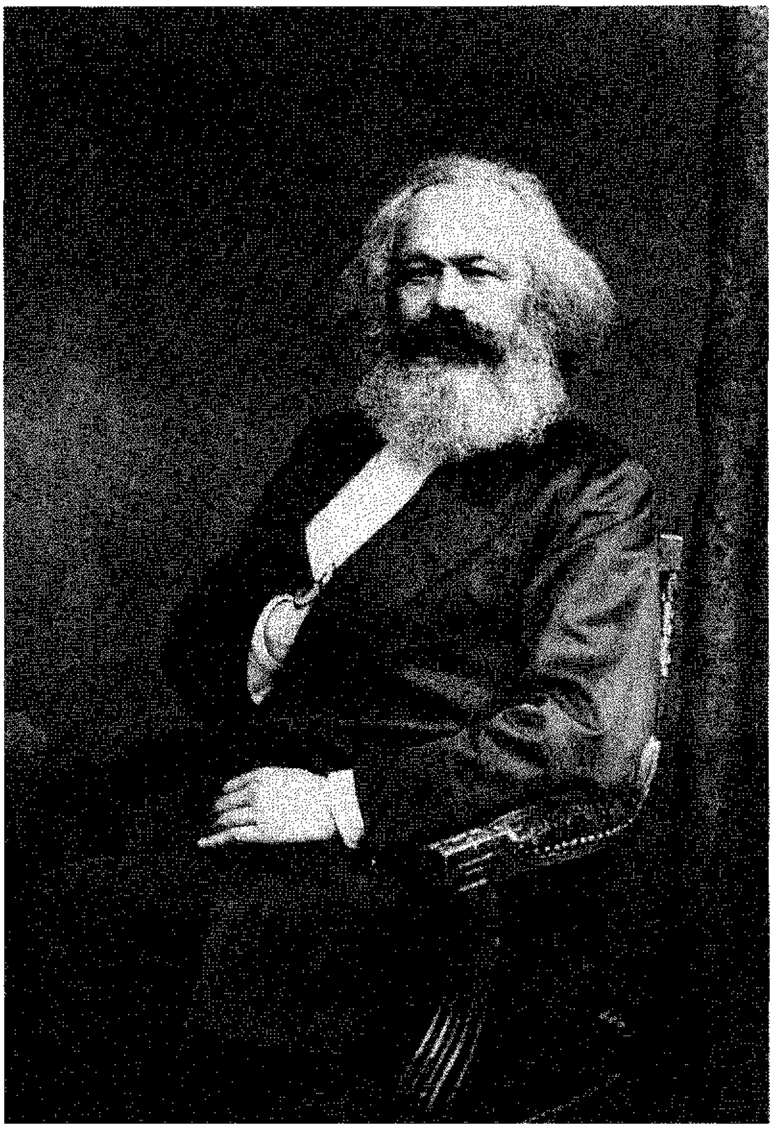
An incident when I practiced medicine many years later on an island in the Pacific Ocean reinforced this lesson. Next to the small psychiatric hospital, with its yard enclosed by a high wire fence, was the leper colony. Every afternoon, the lepers would gather at the fence to mock the lunatics as they were let out for their exercise, performing their strange dances and shouting at unseen persecutors.

The victory over cruelty is never final, but, like the maintenance of freedom, requires eternal vigilance. And it requires, as in "Mumu," the exercise of the sympathetic imagination.

Turning from Turgenev to Marx (although the *Manifesto* appears under the names of both Marx and Engels, it was almost entirely Marx's work), we enter a world of infinite bile—of rancor, hatred, and contempt—rather than of sorrow or compassion. It is true that Marx, like Turgenev, is on the side of the underdog, of the man with nothing, but in a wholly disembodied way. Where Turgenev hopes to lead us to behave humanly, Marx aims to incite us to violence. Moreover, Marx brooked no competitors in the philanthropic market. He was notoriously scathing about all would-be practical reformers: if lower class, they lacked the philosophic training necessary to penetrate to the causes of misery; if upper class, they were hypocritically trying to preserve "the system." Only he knew the secret of turning the nightmare into a dream.

In fact, the hecatombs his followers piled up are—to the last million victims—implicit in the *Manifesto*. The intolerance and totalitarianism inhere in the beliefs expressed: "The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties. They have no interest separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole."

In other words, there is no need for other parties, let alone individuals with their own personal quirks: indeed, since the Communists so perfectly express the interests of the proletariat, anyone opposed to the Communists must, by definition, be opposed to the interests of the proletariat. Moreover, since the Communists "openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions," it follows that Lenin and Stalin were perfectly right in eliminating their opponents by force. And since, according to Marx, the ideas that people have are determined by their position in the economic structure of society, it is not even necessary for people to declare their enmity: it can be known ex officio, as it were. The killing of the kulaks was the practical application of Marxist epistemology.


BROWN BROTHERS

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

As you read the *Manifesto*, a ghostly procession of Marxist catastrophes seems to rise up from it, as from the witches' brew in *Macbeth*. Take for example points 8 and 9 of the Communist program (interestingly, as in God's program published on Mount Sinai, there were ten in all): "8. Equal liability to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture. 9. Combination of agriculture with industry, promotion of the gradual elimination of the contradictions between town and countryside." Those who experienced Pol Pot's regime, and Ceaușescu's "systematization," which demolished villages and replaced them with half-completed high-rise apartments in the middle of fields, will have no difficulty in recognizing the provenance of their misfortunes.

The *Manifesto* makes no mention of individual human life, except to deny its possibility under present conditions. True, Marx mentions a few authors by name, but only to pour heavily Teutonic scorn and contumely upon them. For him, there are no individuals, or true humans, at all. "In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality."

It is no wonder, then, that Marx speaks only in categories: the *bourgeois*, the *proletarian*. For him, individual men are but clones, their identity with vast numbers of others being caused not by the possession of the same genes, but by that of the same relations to the economic system. Why study a man, when you know Men?

Nor is this the only generalization in the *Manifesto* that reduces the entire population of men to mere ciphers: "On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. . . . But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution. . . . The bourgeois claptrap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of modern industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labor. . . . The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. . . . Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives. Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalized community of women."

There is no mistaking the hatred and rage of these words; but anger, while a real and powerful emotion, is not necessarily an honest one, nor is it by any means always ungratifying. There is a permanent temptation, particularly for intellectuals, to suppose that one's virtue is proportional to one's hatred of vice, and that one's hatred of vice is in turn to be measured by one's vehemence of denunciation. But when Marx wrote these words, he must surely have known that they were, at best, a savage caricature, at worst a deliberate distortion calculated to mislead and to destroy.

As a family man, he himself was not an unqualified success. Although he lived a bourgeois existence, it was a disorderly, bohemian one, flamboyantly squalid. Two of his daughters, Laura and Eleanor, committed suicide, partly as a result of his interference in their lives. But not even his worst enemy could claim that he saw in his wife, Jenny von Westphalen, "a mere instrument of production," a spinning jenny, so to speak. Half his youthful poems were addressed to her in the most passionate and romantic terms only a few years before he wrote the *Manifesto*; and though their relations had later cooled, he was nevertheless deeply affected by her death and did not long survive her. Even he, whose information about people came mainly from books, must have known that the *Manifesto*'s depiction of the relations between men and women was grossly distorted. His rage was therefore—as is so much modern rage—entirely synthetic, perhaps an attempt to assume a generosity of spirit, or love of mankind, that he knew he did not have but felt he ought to have.

His lack of interest in the individual lives and fates of real human beings—what Mikhail Bakunin once called his lack of sympathy with the human race—shines out in his failure to recognize the often noble attempts by workingmen to maintain a respectable family life in the face of the greatest difficulties. Was it really true that they had no family ties, and that their children were mere articles of commerce? For whom were they mere articles of commerce? It is typical of Marx's unrigorous mind that he should leave the answer ambiguous, as if commerce could exist independently of the people carrying it on.

Only his outrage, like the grin of the Cheshire cat, is clear.

Marx's firm grasp of unreality is also evident in his failure to imagine what would happen when, through the implementation of the ideas of radical intellectuals influenced by his mode of thinking, the bourgeois family really would break down, when "the practical absence of the family" really would become an undeniable social fact. Surely the increased sexual jealousy, the widespread child neglect and abuse, and the increase in the interpersonal violence (all in conditions of unprecedented material prosperity) should have been utterly predictable to anybody with a deeper knowledge than his of the human heart.

Compare Marx's crudity with Turgenev's subtlety, alluded to by Henry James, who knew Turgenev in Paris and wrote an essay about him a year after his death: "Like all men of a large pattern, he was composed of many different pieces; and what was always striking in him was the mixture of simplicity with the fruit of the most various observation. . . . I had [once] been moved to say of him that he had the aristocratic temperament: a remark which in the light of further knowledge seemed singularly inane. He was not subject to any definition of that sort, and to say that he was democratic would be (though his political ideal was democracy) to give an equally superficial account of him. He felt and understood the opposite sides of life; he was imaginative, speculative, anything but literal. . . . Our Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, moralistic, conventional standards were far away from him, and he judged things with a freedom and spontaneity in which I found a perpetual refreshment. His sense of beauty, his love of truth and right, were the foundation of his nature; but half the charm of his conversation was that one breathed an air in which cant phrases and arbitrary measurements simply sounded ridiculous."

I don't think anyone could have said this of Marx. When he wrote that "the workingmen have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got," he wrote as a man who, as far as is known, had never taken the trouble to canvass the living views of anyone but himself. His pronouncement of the death of nationalist feeling was premature, to say the least. And when he wrote that the bourgeois would lament the cultural loss that the proletarian revolution inevitably entailed, but that "that culture . . . is, for the enormous majority, a mere training to act as a machine," he failed to acknowledge the profoundly moving attempts of workingmen in Britain to acquire that very culture as a liberating and ennobling agency. It needs very little effort of the imagination to understand what fortitude it took to work in a Victorian factory by day and read Ruskin and Carlyle, Hume and Adam Smith by night, as so many workingmen did (volumes from their lending libraries and institutes are still to be found in British secondhand bookshops); but it was an effort that Marx was never prepared to make, because he did not consider it worthwhile to make it. One might ask whether he has not set a pattern for hordes of cultivated brutes in the academy, who have destroyed for others what they themselves have benefited from.

Very different from all this, the sympathy that Turgenev expressed for the downtrodden was for living, breathing human beings. Because he understood what Henry James called "the opposite sides of life," he understood that there was no denouement to history, no inevitable apocalypse, after which all contradictions would be resolved, all conflicts cease, when men would be good because arrangements were perfect, and when political and economic control would turn into mere administration for the benefit of everyone without distinction. Marx's eschatology, lacking all common sense, all knowledge of human nature, rested on abstractions that were to him more real than the actual people around him. Of course, Turgenev knew the value of generalizations and could criticize institutions such as serfdom, but without any silly utopian illusions: for he knew that Man was a fallen creature, capable of improvement, perhaps, but not of perfection. There would therefore be no hecatombs associated with Turgenev's name.

Marx claimed to know Man, but as for men other than his enemies—he knew them not. Despite being a Hegelian dialectician, he was not interested in the opposite sides of life. Neither kindness nor cruelty moved him: men were simply the eggs from which a glorious omelette would one day be made. And he would be instrumental in making it.

When we look at our social reformers—their language, their concerns, their style, the categories in which they think—do they resemble Marx or Turgenev more? Turgenev—who wrote a wonderful essay entitled "Hamlet and Don Quixote," a title that speaks for itself—would not have been surprised to discover that the Marxist style had triumphed.

By a curious twist of fate, the coldhearted Marxist utopians in Russia found a cynical use for Turgenev's story "Mumu," which they printed in tens of millions of copies, to justify their own murderous ruthlessness in destroying every trace of the former society. Could any more terrible and preposterous fate have befallen Turgenev's tale than that it should have been used to justify mass murder? Could there be any more eloquent example of the ability of intellectual abstraction to empty men's hearts and minds of a sense of shame and of true feeling for humanity?

Let us recall, however, one detail of Turgenev's and Marx's biographical trajectory in which they differed. When Marx was buried, hardly anyone came to his funeral (in poetic revenge, perhaps, for his failure to attend the funeral of his father, who adored and sacrificed much for him). When the remains of Turgenev returned to St. Petersburg from France, scores of thousands of people, including the humblest of the humble, turned out to pay their respects—and with very good reason. ■

Why a Classical Lincoln Center Is Visionary

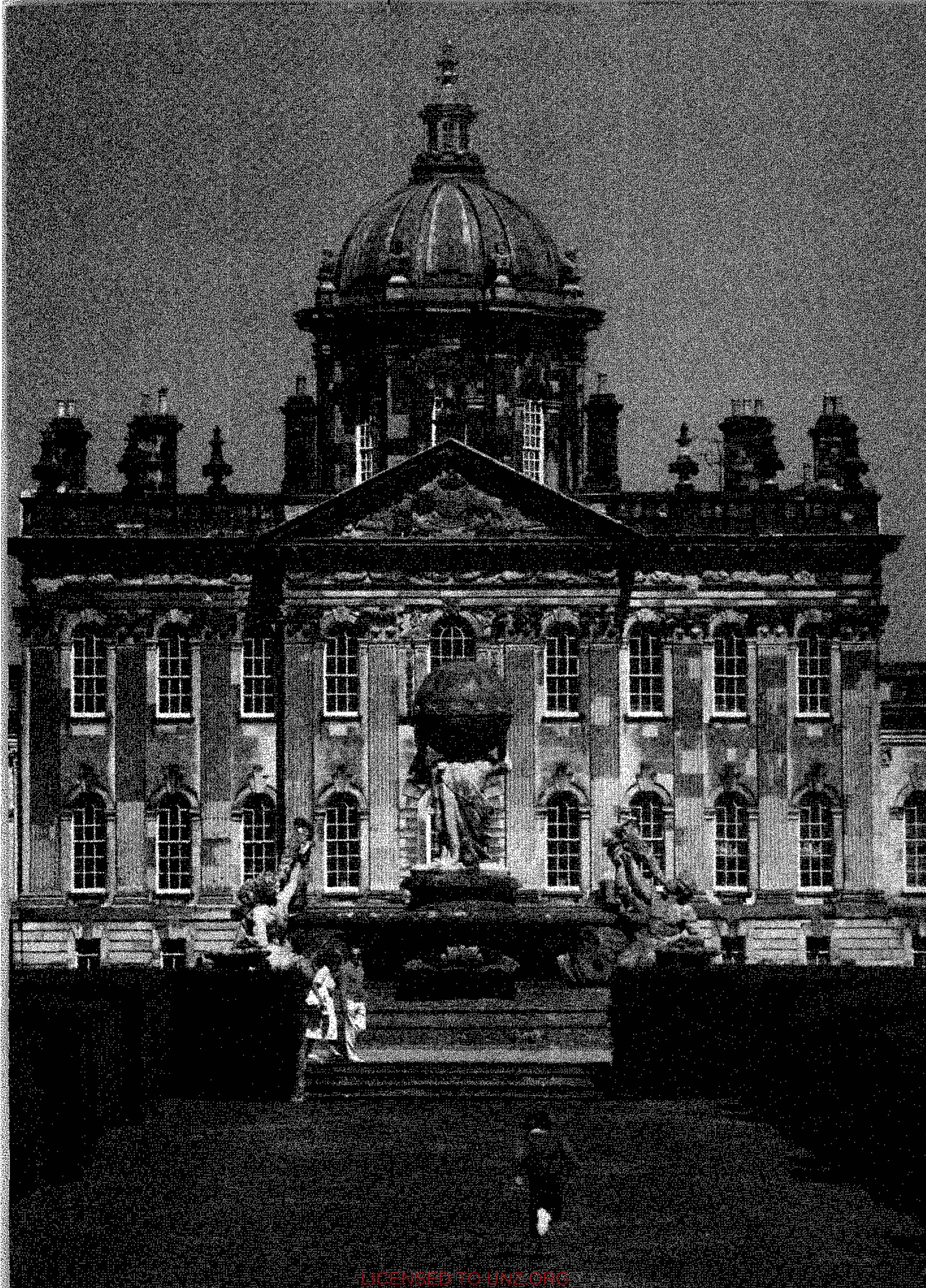
David Watkin

Last year, *City Journal* urged that, instead of squandering a proposed $1.5 billion to restore Lincoln Center—crumbling buildings that few admire either for their architecture or their acoustics—the Center's trustees should tear down the whole complex and build up a new, lasting, architecturally distinguished one in the classical style, which could be done for the same money (some 20 percent of which will come from the taxpayers) now proposed for repairs and refurbishment ("A New Lincoln Center," Autumn 2000). The suggestion, and the accompanying plans by three distinguished classical architects of our day, generated considerable interest but considerable unease, too. Yes, classical buildings are beautiful: as witness most of the buildings New Yorkers love. But could anyone seriously build in the classical style today, especially when a world-class monument is at issue? Wouldn't it be backward-looking, "pastiche," not in the spirit of the age? Worse, wouldn't anyone who did it look like a know-nothing philistine, the kind of vulgar plutocrat who proverbially says, "I don't know if it's art, but I know what I like"—a person who belongs on the board not of Lincoln Center but of Disneyland?

The current architectural mandarins tell us all this, and they've cowed many; in matters of taste, no one wants to appear uncultivated and unsophisticated. But their assertion that the only intellectually and aesthetically acceptable way to build is the modernist or postmodernist way is hogwash, the intellectual equivalent of the emperor's new clothes. What has their orthodoxy produced, after all, but hundreds of look-alike cities, with their indistinguishable, mass-produced, glass-and-grid high-rises that no one could love or wish to call home? A brilliant classical Lincoln Center would show the world that the way forward from the dead end of modernism, an architecture not of the future but of the past, is to reconnect ourselves with the living, endlessly changing, endlessly inventive tradition of the classical. Such a project, once built, would change the history of architecture; and those who built it would, ten or 20 years hence, look not like philistines but visionaries.

In every age, some genius has come along to blow a great wind of new life into the classical tradition, creating buildings of fantastic excitement that, though of their own age, have grown out of a centuries-old language. Why should we accept the defeatist view that in the twenty-first century we are no longer capable of producing a genius within this tradition, a genius at once creative and civil? Classical architecture has never been of one period but has been reinvented and rediscovered over and over again, from the architects in the

Until Castle Howard, only houses of God had domes.



ancient Roman world who reinvented the style of the Greeks, to architects from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, such as Alberti, Michelangelo, Bernini, Soane, and Lutyens. Why is there any reason to suppose that so venerable, fertile, and brilliant a tradition should suddenly come to an end?

The style of most public buildings for 2,500 years, from ancient times to at least the 1950s, was classical. Through such buildings in Europe and the U.S., we identify ourselves by relating to the civilization of which we should be proud to be the heirs. Like the English language, the classical tradition provides us with an inherited grammar and syntax of maximum strength and vitality, which provides a sure base for rich experimentation. As the contemporary New York architect and Yale architecture dean Robert A. M. Stern puts it, “Classicism is the only codified, amplified, and perennially vital form of architectural language.”

To prove that contention, let us enter, for example, the amazing staircase hall that Michelangelo built in 1524 for his great first-floor library attached to the Medici Church of San Lorenzo in Florence. When we enter, we are daunted by the great height of the room in comparison with its modest footprint. With necks strained by the effort of looking up, we are confronted by three flights of stairs before us. The effect is so curious that it has been described as a staircase that impedes ascent, for the undulating curves of the central flight recall melting wax, descending from above, while the side flights are positively perilous, lacking protective balustrades at their outer edges.

On the side walls of the room, great volute brackets seem to carry the weight of coupled columns, but on closer inspection we find that they are detached from those columns, which themselves, far from being functional supports, are buried into the wall mass. In other words, Michelangelo has ironically dissolved the certainties of a wall, which normally would be clearly articulated with functional columns, and he has replaced it with a piece of linear abstract sculpture. It is a daunting but exciting space, which startled Michelangelo’s contemporaries, the critic Vasari explaining that “he broke the bonds and chains of usage that craftsmen had always followed. In his library of S. Lorenzo he departed so much from the common use of others, that everyone was amazed.”

Michelangelo’s Laurentian Library unsettles our certainties.

Castle Howard, the house built for the earl of Carlisle in 1701–26 from designs by Sir John Vanbrugh, similarly flung down a challenge to all previous architecture by sporting a tall and insolent dome, which lights an overpoweringly lofty hall. Such domes had previously been reserved for churches—that is, for the houses of God, not those of man. Once again, a famous contemporary expressed the shock of this work, Horace Walpole exclaiming after his visit to Castle Howard, “Nobody had informed me that at one view I should see a palace, a town, a fortified city, temples on high places, woods worthy of being each a metropolis of the Druids, and a mausoleum that would tempt one to be buried alive!” The palatial swagger of Vanbrugh’s Castle Howard is suggestive of its patron’s pride in the lineage of the Howard family and its place in history. It was a brilliant and unprecedented way in which the earl of Carlisle could articulate in stone his family ancestry, his metropolitan connections, his position at court, and his knowledge of Continental architecture.

After Vanbrugh’s death, Robert Adam studied antiquity in immense detail, in search of a basis for reforming modern architecture, which he thought had become lumpish and boring. He and his brother James boasted in 1773 of “the novelty and variety” of their designs, explaining, “We have not trod in the paths of others, nor derived aid from their labors,” so that “[t]he massive entablature, the ponderous compartment ceiling, the tabernacle frame, almost the only species of ornament formerly known in this country, are now universally exploded, and in their place we have adopted a beautiful variety of light mouldings and a great diversity of ceilings.”

This beautiful passage offers the daring image of an explosion at the heart of the classical language, whose splintered elements the Adam brothers then reassembled in new ways. They achieved this recombination in sequences of spaces of breathtaking beauty and surprise, such as those at Derby House (1773), where they blew open one wall of the groin-vaulted drawing room and replaced it by a pair of columns, darkly silhouetted against light billowing in from the great curved window of the room beyond. The movement and the contrast of light and shade are akin to the effects "Capability" Brown was achieving at the same time in the new art of landscape gardening.

Derby House is demolished, part of its site being occupied by the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square, but we can visit Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields (1792–1824) for a similar experience of novelty and freshness. Once again, a genius has taken the language of classical architecture and updated it to create totally original effects. Imagine the enchantment of dining with Soane in 1813, after one of his many remodelings of his house. Having been lucky enough to have been present at more than one dinner in this room, I can attest to the cries of astonished admiration with which visitors greet it on such occasions. In this glittering, candle-lit space, painted a neo-antique Pompeiian red, there are baffling mirrors above the top of the arched bookcases all around them, which suggest that the room floats beyond its walls. Moreover, mirror-glass panels slide out to cover the whole window wall in the evening.

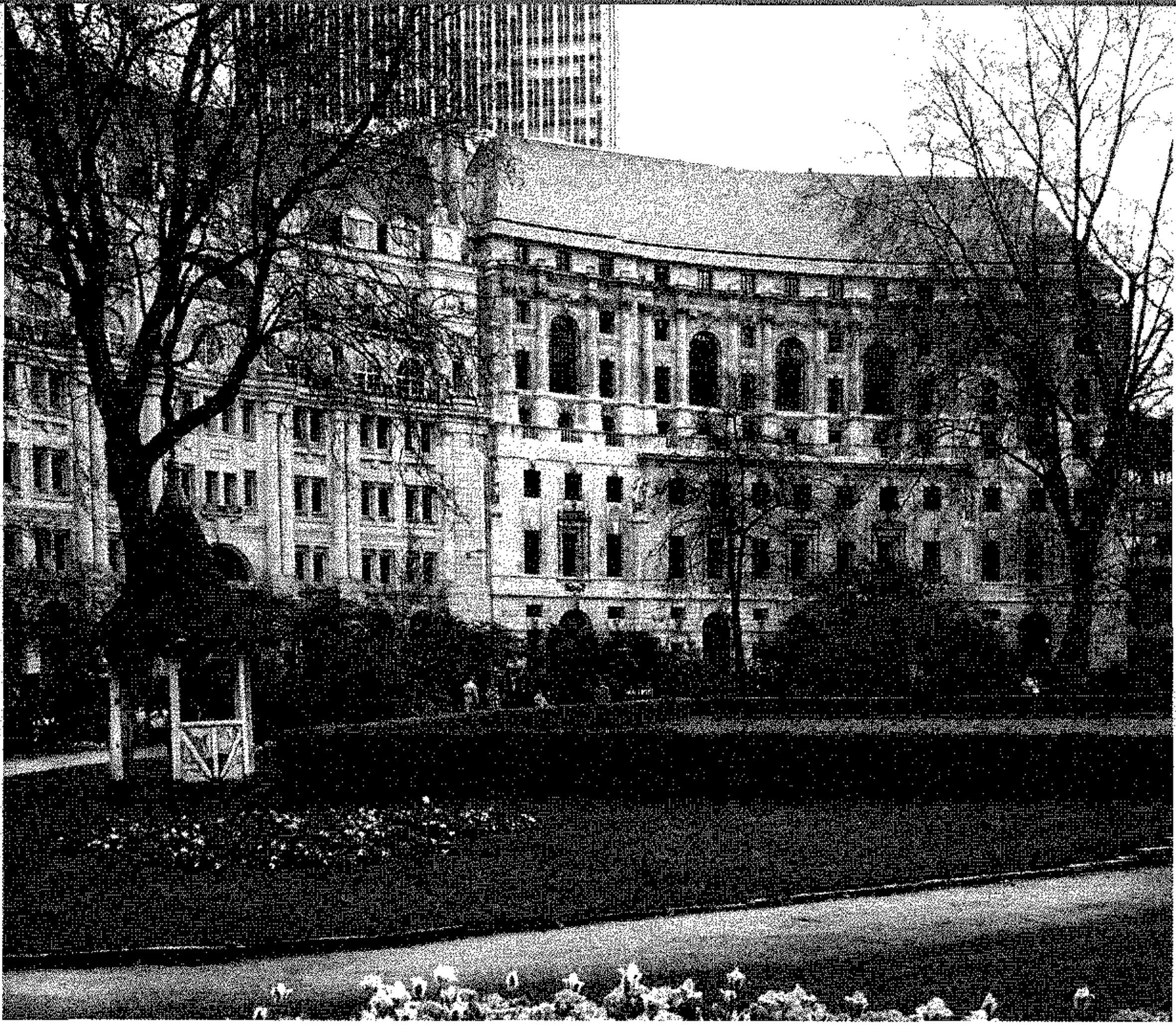
From here we walk into the adjacent "Breakfast Parlour," where Soane responded to the plea of George Dance, in whose office he had worked, for an "Architecture unshackled[,] which would afford to the greatest genius the greatest opportunities of producing the most powerful efforts of the human mind." The hovering dome in the Breakfast Parlour has been so unshackled that it hovers like a parachute, the real ceiling rising up behind it. This combination of piety toward the classical tradition with a search for novelty finds further expression throughout the house in Soane's unique technique of sticking decorative fragments of demolished classical buildings onto the walls so as to create a bizarre collage. Soane thus created order out of discontinuity, historical memory being the glue that makes sense of all this fragmentation.

A baffled critic wrote in 1837 of Soane's house in Lincoln's Inn Fields that the whole place resembled "a temporary experiment, trial or model of what was intended to be executed on a large scale." Other critics were harsher, but magnanimity prevailed, and Soane was knighted in 1831 and invited to become president of the newly founded Royal Institute of British Architects.

At the Bank of England, which he expanded continuously from 1788 to 1833, Soane created one of the most spectacular series of spaces in England. One entered through a triumphal arch into a court flanked by screens of free-standing columns, leading into banking halls poetically surmounted by hovering domes. Since the City of London establishment saw the Bank as one of the few public buildings in London to rival those on the Continent, Soane was asked to have it dramatically illuminated to celebrate major victories in the Napoleonic Wars. Foreign heads of state ceremonially visited it, including Czar Alexander of Russia, who was shown round by Soane on the occasion of the visit to London of the Allied Sovereigns in 1814.

In the 1920s, another great English architect, Edwin Lutyens, gleefully appropriated the architecture of imperial Rome, and of such Renaissance architects as Sansovino and Palladio, and transformed it inventively to build giant, exuberant office buildings in the City of London. One of the most powerful is his Britannic House, Finsbury Circus (1920–24), with a breathtaking curved facade that forms an unprecedented sunlit arc, rippling and dancing like a set of symphonic variations in music. Its constantly flickering rusticated surfaces are so joyous, so self-conscious, and so knowing, that Lutyens can break all the supposed rules with impunity: for example, he places the biggest windows, huge arched ones, at the very top, below the main cornice line. Their size is justified because they light the boardroom. Once again, a genius has taken a tradition to which he has expressed appropriate piety and developed it with creative brilliance, so that, with a steel frame enabling Britannic House

The ceiling of Sir John Soane's Breakfast Parlour seems to float.



At Britannic House, Edwin Lutyens exuberantly updated the architecture of Rome and the Renaissance.

to rise to great height, it does not deceive us for a moment that we are actually in ancient Rome. It is decisive proof, like so many of New York's fine buildings of the first half of the twentieth century, that the classical language and high-rise buildings can go perfectly well together.

Lutyens well conveys his excitement at his early discovery of this language in a letter he wrote in 1903 to the architect Herbert Baker, with whom he was to collaborate in New Delhi: "In architecture Palladio is the game. It is so big—few appreciate it now and it requires considerable training to value and realise it. To the average man it is dry bones but under the mind of a Christopher Wren it glows and the stiff materials become as plastic as clay." And that is how the classical tradition gets passed down: one great mind finding the inspiration to create something new by meditating upon how his predecessors creatively reinterpreted their own forebears.

During the fertile 1920s, as well, the Slovenian Joze Plecnik, who has gone largely unnoticed in all the standard histories of modern architecture until recently but is now widely regarded as one of the greatest architects of the twentieth century, was building dazzling classical public buildings in Prague and Ljubljana. He saw himself as producing a new classical architecture to express the newly democratic Czechoslovakian and Slovenian republics that emerged out of the collapse of the Habsburg Empire after World War I. Plecnik saw "architecture as a summing up of civilization, through adaptation of motifs from the past," and his works demonstrate that the classical language is a continuing fount of inspiration, in which forms translated to new contexts can take on new meanings. A typical expression of his belief in an imaginative interpretation of the past, combined with his surprising fertility of invention, is his Vzajemna Insurance Company offices at Ljubljana of 1928–30. Its rich mesh of red brick columns against white stone rises to an astonishing frieze of carved angels linked by swirling ropes, suggestive of the mutuality of the insurance company.

In Prague Castle, where Plecnik was official architect for 15 years, his task, given to him by President Jan Masaryk, was to turn the dilapidated site, abandoned by the monarchy three centuries earlier, into the symbol and headquarters for the new democracy. For this task, he believed (as did architect Thomas Jefferson), only the architectural language inherited from the democracies of classical antiquity was adequate. In the castle's great hall, Plecnik's stairs cascade down in the light-filled space as though frozen in the moment of descent. The rich composition also incorporates columns so slender that they could be described as minimalist; but though stripped down, they are serious classical statements, incorporated into a legible and coherent classical framework, unlike the trivial jokes of postmodernism. With dreary predictability, when the communists took power, they excoriated Plecnik's work as conservative and excised it from the architecture textbooks.

In our own day, Quinlan Terry turned to the Georgian tradition of the urban neighborhood for inspiration in his Richmond Riverside of 1986–88, a large mixed residential, office, and shop development in greater London, which seems when you visit it like an ideal vision of an old town blessed with a rich architectural heritage. Through the use of his travel sketchbooks and the pattern books in his office, Terry conducts an entertaining dialogue with the past, so that, in his words, "many of the buildings pick up the characteristic details of English and Italian architecture, in particular Palladio, Longhena, Sansovino, Hawksmoor, William Chambers, and the Gothic revival of the 19th century." Richmond Riverside also shows that traditional forms can suit new functions. It has been as popular with the general public as it is unpopular with the architectural establishment. Richmond Riverside has the spirit of play that recalls those eighteenth-century architects who provided clients with classical and Gothic plans for the same building, so that they could choose which style they wanted. It is gleeful but sophisticated architecture that almost cries out, "Look at me! How many references can you get?" (See "A New Order for Office Buildings," Spring 1996.)

What is so remarkable about architects like these is that they show how the classical language of architecture is not a straitjacket that prevents the expression of the individual but a liberating force. Though classical, their work is also so varied that it would not be taken for the product of any other moment than that at which it was created. It is not a re-creation of the past but a confidence-inspiring declaration that we can make use of the rich inheritance we have received from the past, even while we add to it, re-adapt it, take it a step further, and make it wholly our own, like Brahms's great variations on a theme by Handel.

By contrast, modernism condemns itself to express newness, the future, or, as Sigfried Giedion depressingly put it, "the eternal present." Yet in the twenty-first century, modernism, no longer new, can represent nothing more than the shock of the old. We should realize that we have the inestimable privilege of being able to conduct a dialogue between the ancient world, idealized as it has always been, and the creative present. A dialogue: we are not ventriloquists' dummies who cannot speak for ourselves. Amazingly, we can talk to Michelangelo in Laurentian Library, to Palladio, to Soane—and be inspired, not absorbed, by them.

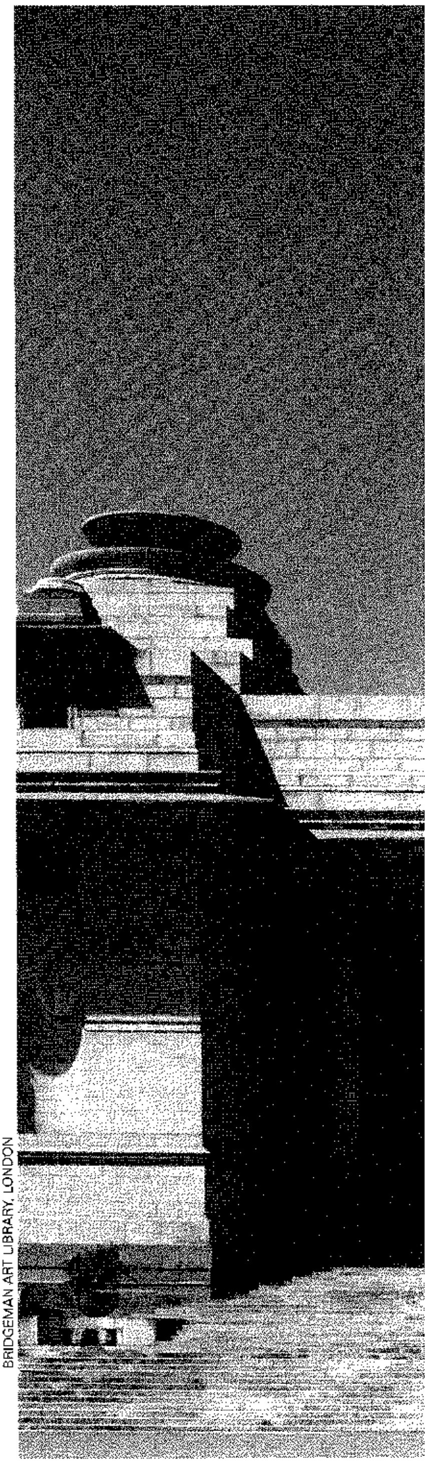
What a richer, more life-affirming vision this is than the tired old modernist idea of yesterday. Take, by way of comparison, a recent *New York Times* article by Herbert Muschamp, condemning Friedrich St. Florian's National World War II Memorial to be built in Washington. Muschamp rejects the monument's classicism, preferring instead the Washington structures of I. M. Pei, Maya Lin, and James Ingo Freed, structures that, he claims, "have challenged the status quo." That, he says, is what an American architecture must do, since "our political system is great because it enables authority to be challenged." Classical architecture rests on the idea that there are "universal laws"; we modern Americans demur, focusing on "the relative and the complex." In place of classicism's "yearning for the timeless and eternal," we choose "irony or ambiguity."

This strange mix of the generation of 1968's perpetual challenging of authority and the cool detachment of *fin-de-siècle* postmodern hip can find no meaning beyond the rejection of all the meanings mankind has cherished hitherto. It is a sterile and unnourishing idea, which at last devours even itself: for in his unquestioned assumption that there is inherent merit in permanent revolution, in perpetually challenging the status quo, Muschamp forgets that modernism is the status quo. What more appropriate challenge to it can there be than classicism, by which we can reenter the centuries-long human dialogue on which modernism arrogantly and indignantly turned its back.

The architectural establishment's insistence that we must follow "the spirit of the age" is not a perennial idea but a relatively recent one, adopted by the modernists and their sycophants in the academies to force us to build in only one way: their own. But great architects for half a millennium have paid no heed to this notion. The beautiful Piazza Santissima Annunziata in Florence, for example, has Brunelleschi's famous Foundling Hospital of 1419 on one side; on the opposite side, to create harmony, San Gallo built a copy of it a century later: the same facade, but completely different interiors. It would now be condemned as "untruthful" and "not of its own time!" An even more distinguished scheme that would be condemned if proposed today is the whole south side of the Capitoline square in Rome, built by Rainaldi in 1644–54, based on Michelangelo's design of over a century earlier, in order to create harmony. That would not be allowed today, when something "frankly modern" would be demanded, for no amount of historical evidence or philosophical argument has so far entirely shifted the depressing effluvia of yesterday's modernist belief that, if you add on to a historic building, you must be "truthful" by not harmonizing with its existing style. In keeping with this belief, New York's Harvard Club proposes to build a cliché glass box in place of the two nineteenth-century stables it will tear down between its beautiful McKim, Mead & White building and Warren & Wetmore's breathtaking New York Yacht Club next door.

Fortunately, the man in the street does not share this worship of the new, his most popular cities being those like Paris, Rome, Venice, and Prague, whose centers are not wrecked by new buildings reflecting "the spirit of their age." Also, contrary to existing histories of architecture, the bulk of twentieth-century buildings, certainly up until 1950, were not modernist but classical. To walk with unblinkered eyes through cities such as Milan, London, and New York is to be dazzled by the sheer inventiveness, the quality in style and materials of the countless twentieth-century classical buildings. One of the most harmful effects of modernism was that it not only damaged our present but obliterated memory of the past.

The folly of this blind worship of the new is clear in a



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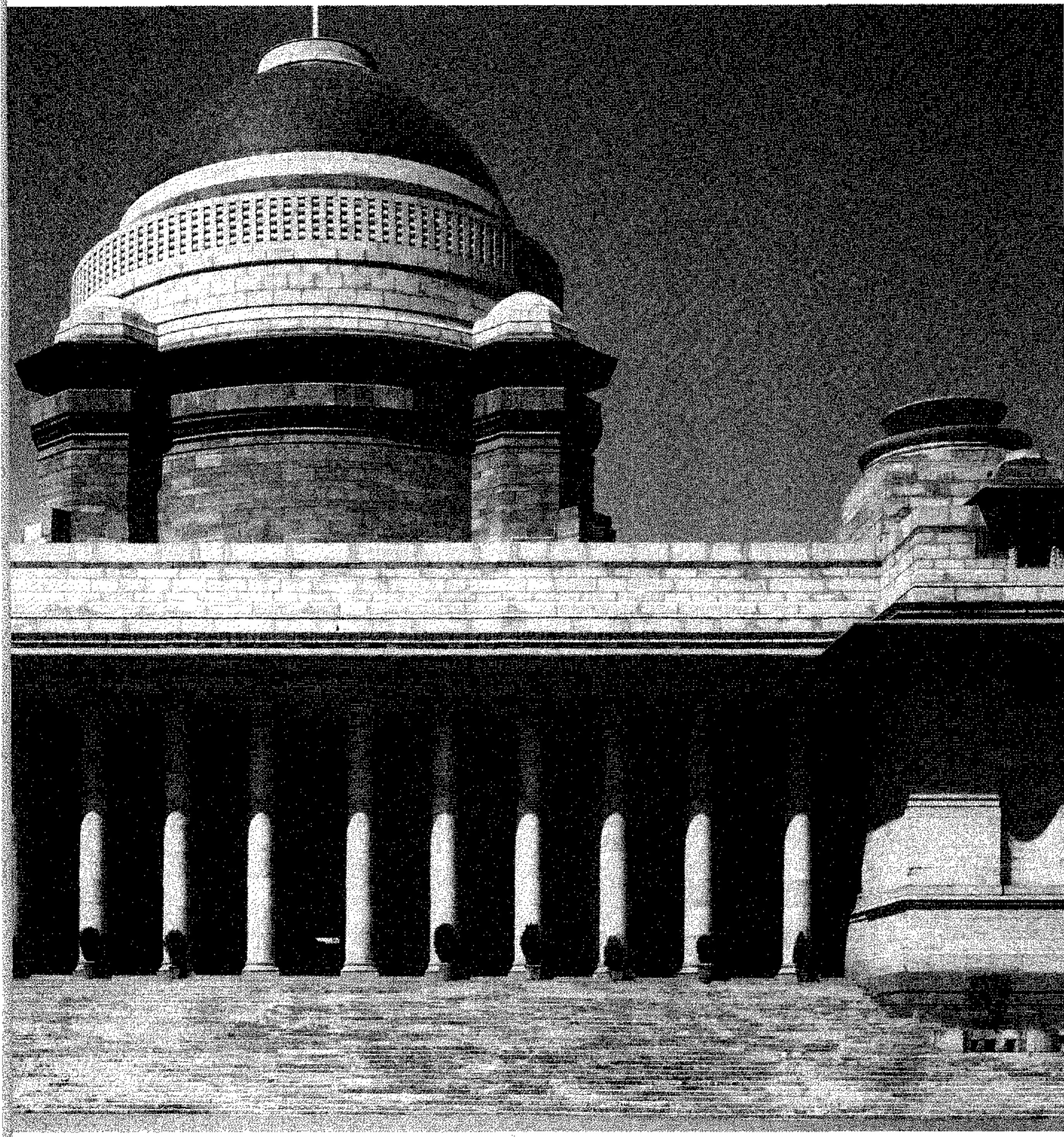
Lutyens's Viceroy's House in New Delhi remains beloved.

Urbanities



comparison of two twentieth-century cities on the Indian subcontinent: New Delhi of 1912–31, by Edwin Lutyens, and Le Corbusier's Chandigarh of 1951–59, founded in 1951 as the administrative capital of the Punjab. Lutyens, one of the most brilliantly inventive masters of space, volume, and planning in the history of British architecture, studied existing Indian traditions with great detail and respect. He managed to incorporate these at New Delhi into a noble, timeless, and humane classical architecture, admired by subsequent inhabitants of Delhi down to the present day. Indeed, Indians don't view the Viceroy's House, with its titanic dome and great Moghul garden, as an unacceptable symbol of imperial domination; they continue to use it happily as the residence of the president. Its cliff-like walls of pink and cream Dholpur stone, with their pronounced inward inclination, incorporate *chujjahs*, the immense down-swept cornices familiar from Mughal and earlier Indian architecture. These cast deep shadows to protect the walls from the heat of the sun, some of those by Lutyens projecting as much as eight feet. His surrounding avenues of domestic architecture have the low density and lavish planting that he derived from English garden cities.

Joze Plecnik intended his staircase hall at Prague Castle to celebrate democracy.

PHILIPPA LEWIS/EDIFICE

Robert Adam's refined detailing

At Chandigarh, by contrast, Le Corbusier showed an insolent disregard for India's traditions and even its climate. He ignored the way in which existing Indian towns had responded to the tropical climate and the largely pedestrian movement patterns by providing narrow streets and inward-looking houses organized around courtyards. He made no provision for traditional activities and customs such as the bazaar, traveling vendors, and, most important, the multi-functionality of spaces. His government buildings at Chandigarh, wholly isolated from the rest of the city, are functionally disastrous, their vast scale allowing a terrifying level of heat and glare. No less horrible are their exposed concrete surfaces, soiled, inhuman, and repellent.

Chandigarh owes much to Le Corbusier's passion for novelty, which coincided with that of Prime Minister Nehru, who declaimed, "Let this be a new town, symbolic of the freedom of India, unfettered by the traditions of the past . . . an expression of the nation's faith in the future." While such iconoclastic language was understandable in the exhilarating first days of Indian independence in 1947, there is no reason that it should still be the language of the architectural establishment in New York in 2001. Indeed, comparing New Delhi and Chandigarh today, which is lasting, and which looks dated and shabby?

The history of Western architecture is effectively the history of the constant adaptability of the classical language to new purposes. The twentieth century believed that something called "modern man" and "modern materials" had rendered the classical tradition redundant. We are surrounded today by compelling evidence of the falsity of that claim, for the twentieth-century city affords the clearest demonstration of the failure of modernism to provide a humane environment.

This is why the proposal to replace Lincoln Center is so exciting, for it enables us to re-establish the classical language of architecture as the expression of high civic consciousness. Nothing but timidity prevents us from realizing this grand ambition, which would lead building back into its old, ever-renewed, endlessly creative channels. ■

The Last Big One

Charles Page

Just after 5 AM *on April 18, 1906, a massive earthquake, measuring 8.3 on the Richter scale, hit the San Francisco Bay area, laying waste to the city. It reduced scores of buildings to dust, ignited fires that raged apocalyptically for four days, and cut San Francisco off from all outside communication. It killed some 3,000 people and cost San Franciscans a staggering $500 million—more than $7 billion in today's dollars. To quell disorder, Mayor E. E. Schmitz declared martial law and in a sharply worded proclamation ordered federal troops and local police "to KILL any and all persons found engaged in Looting or in the Commission of Any Other Crime."*

Charles Page (1847–1912) witnessed this greatest of all American urban disasters and described it with novelistic vividness in the following remarkable letter to his son Stanley. Born in Valparaiso, Chile, where his Philadelphia-trained father practiced medicine, Page was a man of some note. Graduating from Yale in 1868, Page studied law in Europe for two years and then moved to San Francisco, where he was admitted to the bar in 1872. Over a distinguished 40-year career, he won a national reputation as an expert in admiralty law. In 1883, he helped found the Page and Eells legal firm, which still exists today as McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen.

BROWN BROTHERS

The San Francisco earthquake of 1906 devastated the city, . . .

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Dear Stanley:

I write a few words to tell you that we are well and at Charley's home. We have had an awful experience, but the worst has passed. Our home stands uninjured except in the plastering and chimneys. It rocked in the earthquake, almost rolled side to side. You cannot imagine the horrible anxiety for a whole minute as your mother and I stood at 5 in the morning, waiting for the last strength of the walls to give way under the terrible strain. There seemed to be nothing to do but to hold on and await the results. We did not try to rush from the house. The servants rushed down the swaying stairs to join us.

Your mother, I believe, can hardly recall what passed. I heard her crying out (I was holding her) to Alice, "It is God's will," and repeating it again and again and then, when it was over, she was by her bed on her knees. Then we dressed calmly but quickly and went upon the sidewalk, where all the neighbors were congregated in their dressing gowns and slippers. Some had run out in nightgowns and bare feet. We spent the morning in the street, sitting on our garden coping. There were more shocks during the day, all sharp but short.

I shall never forget the terrible feeling of the earthquake, the utter helplessness, the hopelessness of that minute. It seemed as if there would be no end to it except death under the fallen walls—but it did have an end, and our brave house stood the test.

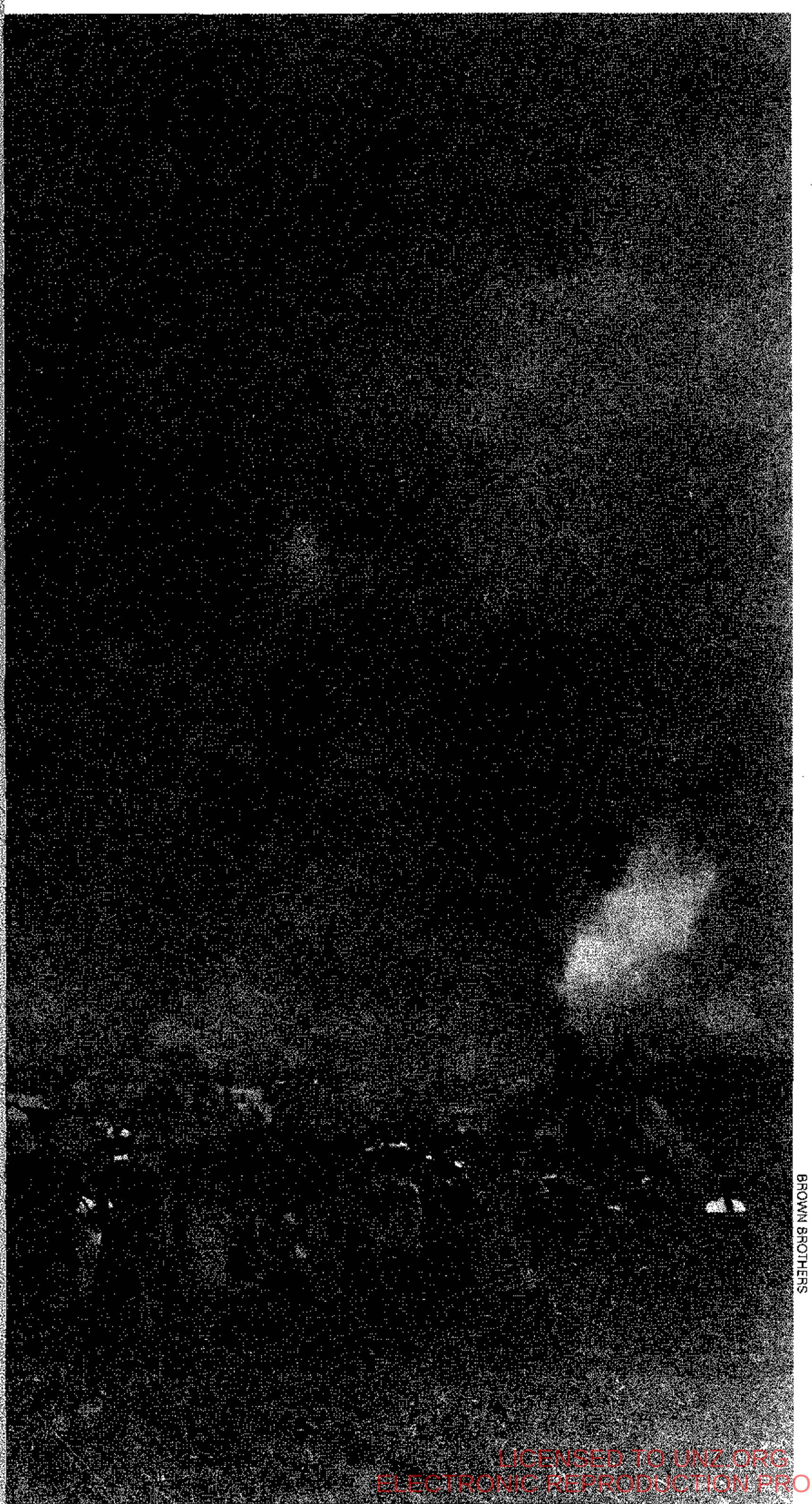
The damage in the city was fearful. I cannot stop to describe it. Then fire broke out, worse than the earthquake, because the water mains had been broken in their beds and there was nothing to check the flames. Soon the city in different places downtown was burning furiously. Nothing could stop it now except lack of further fuel. The wind blew strong from the northwest. All day and all night it roared. From Alta Plaza, we watched it now and again, trying to draw hope that our district might be spared. One hoped for the best; another thought the tendency of the fire was away from us; another saw it eating its way toward us. One way or another, it galloped in great leaps and bounds. Great explosions every now and again came to our ears, the dynamiting of buildings in the vain hope that this would stay the fire. The troops and firemen were all out and working heroically. Martial law was proclaimed, and robbers were shot down without mercy.

The heavens all night again were lurid. We got together in your study, where we lay on the lounge and window seat. The servants were gathered in the hallway, all dressed and ready to fly for life. At last, it seemed toward morning that the fire would not reach us until the second day should come. So we rested quiet. We went in and out of the house, forgetting the possibility of earthquakes in the thought of the fire and the moment when we must desert the house. The hours went by. We made up a few packages in sheets of clothes and such provisions as we could get hold of, and water in bottles, ready to fly for the Presidio. Thousands had been marching by our house all night for that shelter. It was the probable home for all of us before night should again fall. Your uncle came over about noon and asked us to go to Berkeley. He had his wits about him and immediately went to work in the backyard. The Chinaman dug deep trenches into which we threw the silver and bronzes. Trunks were packed and lugged out, pictures were stored up behind the concrete walls of the back garden of the new house next door, which, by the way, had fallen in against our walls. Imagine the feelings of the cook the first morning when he was awakened by the shock. He ran for the door but the lock would not turn; the windows, you know, are barred. There he was, hemmed in, and the next house tumbling against his room! I went to him but I could not help him. A young carpenter going by helped and by smashing the door in gave Han his liberty.

In the afternoon of the second day, Charley got to us. How he managed it, I don't know. The military refused to allow people to go to the city, though all those who wished and could do so, might go from it. Charley somehow got into a launch, landed at the Union Iron Works, and walked to our house. Then he went to work. Your mother then concluded to come to his home, and as Charley asked to be allowed to stay by the house, I came along with your mother. I brought along some of our

. . . collapsing scores of buildings, . . .

Urbanities



BROWN BROTHERS

earthly possessions swung over my back in a sheet. I had clothes, shoes, and all that remained of the office—a few [account] books that Atkinson had brought to me the day before. Our magnificent law library, of course, went with all the other contents of the Mills Building.

It was a heavy load for me to pack; and I have no doubt I made a queer-looking picture, but the earthquakes and fires are effective levelers, and I was for the time doing for myself what the poor Chinamen and Italians were doing for themselves—saving what would be most needed in the next few days and doing the trudging and packing ourselves. About 6:30 PM we bade good-bye to the house and in Athole's buggy started for the waterfront. He sat in my lap as he drove. We went down Broadway to Van Ness and looked toward Clay, two blocks away. The flames had then jumped across the avenue—we turned down toward Bay Street—the very streets had been rent; great ridges had been thrown up, and in places the avenue had fallen in. The fronts of wooden houses had fallen out into the streets; brick houses had been demolished; lampposts were awry; wholesale destruction awful to behold; but all this was nothing to the tens of thousands of human beings—men, women, and children—driven before the flames. Every unbuilt on lot was crowded by them and their bundles; the streets were packed with them as they moved along in search for a place of refuge. They

. . . igniting apocalyptic fires that raged for days, . . .

. . . and costing San Franciscans a staggering $7 billion (in today's dollars) in damage . . .

were living and dying in their places. They were being born and buried in those two days under the open heavens, in sight of those fearful sky-reaching flames and dense masses of smoke, in hearing of dynamite explosions, while the steady tramp of their fellow victims went on before their eyes. Oh! What a sight this made as we drove down to the bay! Yet marvels of all, we saw no crying women or downcast men. There was an exhilaration in the desperation of the moment. What it was, I do not know, but surely men forgot the past, seemed to overlook the present, and to face only the future, the future that would repair the disaster. There were smiles on people's faces at times; there was seriousness all the time but the determination to overcome the disaster was universal.

So noting all around us as we drove, we continued until we got to a ferryboat somewhere on the waterfront. No tickets had to be bought. We stepped on board, two among thousands, and started for Oakland. The view of the burning city that night is beyond description. Just think of the Fairmont lit up in every window by roaring fire!

It was nine before we reached Charley's home. At the station, willing hands helped us out of the train and we were asked whether we had a place to stay. A small boy took the heavy suitcase from your mother and carried it for her, saying that the boys had been thus engaged all day long and that none of them would take pay for it.

The best in human nature has been brought out. From the surgeons who flow from end to end of the doomed city

Urbanities

without resting by night or day, in aid of the wounded; the soldiers, firemen, and volunteers who risked life and limb in fighting invincible fire; to the poorest and least able to help—we saw the same generous helping hand to those in distress. Each according to the measure of his ability—all equal so far as the heart is concerned. San Francisco has had the name of a bad city. If it is, it has received punishment in the extreme. The good in it has never been known until now. Its inhabitants are of all kinds; but neither race, nor education, nor condition in life could be distinguished in the spontaneous outburst of bravery, generosity, and self-sacrifice. All were alike.

I am trying to send you some papers. Address us at 2518 Pacific Avenue. We shall return as soon as possible.

When you have read this letter, send it to Judge Bradford, Wilmington, Delaware.

Your Mother, Charley, and Louise send their love.

Your affectionate Father,

Chas. Page

. . . and some 3,000 lost lives.

Oh, to be in England

The Uses of Corruption

Theodore Dalrymple

I first went to Italy as a boy in 1960, the year of the Rome Olympics, and it was still recognizably a poor country. The standard of living was not very different from that of Cuba before the overthrow of Batista. In one town in Sicily, the country's poorest region, 3,404 humans shared 700 rooms with 5,085 animals, among them pigs, goats, and donkeys. Animal dung, still used as fertilizer, was piled up in the Sicilian streets awaiting use. Visitors from Britain to the Italian peninsula had to treat the water supply with suspicion. My first Italian sojourn ended abruptly when, aged ten, I became delirious from fever and had to be moved to Switzerland to recover; despite the many and dire warnings, I had drunk the Italian tap water. I had not liked to ask my parents all the time for *acqua minerale*.

The infant mortality rate in the year in which I was born was at least three times higher in Italy than in Britain. Now, half a century later, it is lower than in Britain, and Italians in general live longer and healthier lives than Britons. Not only is Italy noticeably richer than Britain, but it is also considerably cleaner. Recently, the newspaper *La Repubblica* carried an article wondering why the British food supply was so unclean and unsafe.

This is an astonishing reversal: for two and a half centuries at least, Britain was much richer than Italy in almost everything except its past. Britons pitied and condescended to their Italian contemporaries. Italy was a country of inexhaustible charm, sybaritic pleasure, and cultural wealth, of course, but it was not to be taken quite seriously in an economic or political sense. Even Mussolini concluded toward the end of his life that Italy was not really a serious country.

According to most published figures, Britain and Italy are now about equal in gross national product per head. No two sources agree on the precise numbers, and of course fluctuations in the value of currencies can alter the relative wealth of two countries without anything else having altered. No source suggests that the difference between the two countries is very great, though. In 1950, the same sources put Italy's per-capita GNP at about 40 percent of Britain's.

I have learned, however, not to trust such measurements entirely. It is all too easy to suppose that a precise figure represents an indubitable fact, like a bank account balance. But the very precision of these figures is suspect. I have been to countries (such as Rumania) whose economies were said by professional GNP-measurers to have been growing at a phenomenal rate for many years, where people nevertheless had to line up for several hours to buy a few rotten potatoes, on the rare occasions when they were available. How many years of breakneck growth would it have taken for potatoes to become generally available in Rumania? Common-sense observation as well as statistics are necessary for assessing the success of an economy.

And by common-sense comparison with Britain's, Italy's economy clearly is very successful. Merely to have caught up with Britain would represent its greater success, but *il sorpasso*, the overtaking of Britain, is evident almost everywhere you look. For example, you do not see in Italy the miles of urban desolation and squalor that characterize so much of Britain. Squalor, upon which British visitors to Italy used to remark with effortless and eloquent superiority, is now far more prevalent at home. The Italian population does not look nearly so gray or crushed by circumstance as the British. The shops in every small provincial town in Italy, even in Sicily, offer luxury goods of a range and quality not to be found even in the largest British cities outside London. Bari is incomparably richer and less dilapidated than Dover.

In 1950, the British owned 12 times as many cars as did Italians: now the Italians own more cars than the British. In that year, the British car industry was the second-largest in the world, but now the only British-owned car manufacturer, Rover, makes a mere 200,000 vehicles a year, and Italy has three car manufacturers, one of them, Fiat, among the largest in the world.

How has the reversal of fortunes come about, and what accounts for it? The two countries are almost identical as far as population density is concerned, and natural resources play a very small part in their economies. If anything, Britain is at an advantage in this respect: for more than 20 years, it has extracted large quantities of oil from the North Sea, partly offsetting its other difficulties in paying its way in the world.

A comparison of the two countries' political stability clearly favors Britain. Silvio Berlusconi, recently elected Italy's prime minister, heads his country's 59th government since the end of the war. This is a rate of government formation and dissolution equaled only by Bolivia. British governments, by contrast, last at least six times as long. The stable alternation in power of two well-established political parties appears, even now, to be a permanent feature of Britain's political landscape.

Nor does economic policy explain the two countries' different growth rates. Italian economic management—or mismanagement—has not differed much from British. Italian inflation has, if anything, been worse; the lira has declined in value nearly twice as far as the pound in the last 40 years. Income distribution in Britain and Italy is very similar, with the top and bottom centiles receiving the same proportion of the national income. Neither greater economic equality nor inequality explains the difference.

As for the Italian state, it has consumed for many years more of the Italian economic product than has the British state. With officially equivalent per-capita GNPs in 1992, the Italian state spent about 25 percent more than the British.

At first sight, you might think this fact vindicates economic *dirigisme*—but only if you had no idea what the Italian state is actually like. The Italian bureaucracy's sole product is seemingly insuperable obstacles to productive activity, even more of them (because the bureaucracy is larger and more convoluted) than its British equivalent. The simplest procedures that involve an Italian bureaucracy rapidly turn—for the uninitiated—into a maze of byzantine complexity, from which it is almost impossible ever to emerge. Foreigners who have lived in Italy invariably recount their epic struggles with public utilities, the legatees of state monopolies, to have a telephone connected, for example, or to pay the gas bill. How can a modern economy not only function but flourish in such circumstances?

The Italian public administration has traditionally had one saving grace by comparison with its British counterpart, however: its corruption.

Admittedly, corruption is a strange kind of virtue: but so is honesty in pursuit of useless or harmful ends. Corruption is generally held to be a vice, and viewed in the abstract, it is. But bad behavior can sometimes have good effects, and good behavior bad effects.

Where administration is light and bureaucracy small, bureaucratic honesty is an incomparable virtue; but where these are heavy and large, as in all modern European states, Britain and Italy not least among them, they burden and obstruct the inventive and energetic. Where bureaucrats are honest, no one can cut through their Laocoönian coils: their procedures, no matter how onerous, antiquated, or bloody-minded, must be endured patiently. Such bureaucrats can neither be hurried in their deliberations nor made to see common sense. Indeed, the very absurdity or pedantry of these deliberations is for them the guarantee of their own fair-mindedness, impartiality, and disinterest. To treat all people with equal contempt and indifference is the bureaucrat's idea of equity.

In such circumstances, the use of personal influence or bribery by a petitioner at the bar of bureaucracy may actually represent an increase in efficiency. It would be better that the bureaucracy did not exist at all, of course; but it does exist and is unlikely soon to disappear. (My experience in Britain suggests that all official attempts to reduce bureaucracy actually increase it.) The man who can bribe or call upon the illicit influence of his brother-in-law is not obliged passively to await a decree from the bureaucratic Olympus: he retains some control over the situation (and also, therefore, some self-respect).

Where the state looms large in everyone's life, a degree of corruption exerts a beneficial effect upon the character of the people. Only up to a point, of course: when the state is all-embracing and official corruption becomes total, both together stifle wealth creation, and general impoverishment results. In the end, the demonetarization of the economy ensues, as under communism. Italy never came near this stage, however, and Italian bureaucrats were astute enough not to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs. The richer the society around them, the more they could themselves extract from it. What was good for business was good for them. (Officials in China's relatively flourishing Guangdong province appear to have grasped this principle, too.)

AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS (2)

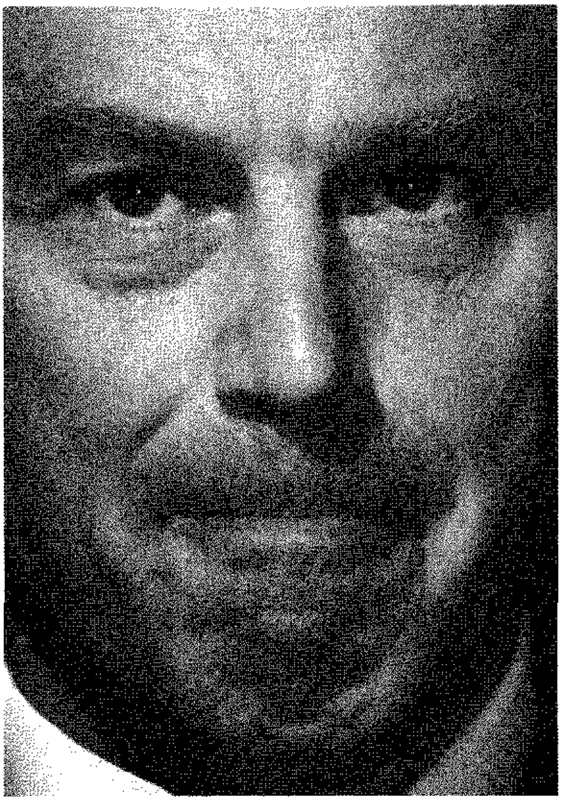
The new Italian prime minister Berlusconi's laissez-faire approach . . .

The thoroughly obvious corruption of Italian officials convinced the population that the state was their enemy, not their patron or protector, and they regarded it with profound mistrust. Accordingly, people of all classes evaded taxes, without moral opprobrium; everyone regarded the idea of revealing one's entire income to the authorities and paying the taxes upon it as laughable in its naïveté. As far as possible, people concealed their economic activity from the eyes of the state, giving rise to Italy's notorious "black" economy, a kind of parallel market, which is by common consent larger and more sophisticated than in any other European state. The size of this parallel market probably explains why the country, with an official per-capita GNP the size of Britain's, looks very much more prosperous than Britain.

The need to evade the depredations of the state and to make alternative arrangements for functions (like social security) that the state claimed, but usually failed, to carry out, meant that the Italian population had to fend for itself. With governments that fell like skittles—and quite long periods without any government at all—no Italian could possibly imagine that the politicians or the state they governed held the key to their prosperity. Necessity in Italy was not so much the mother of invention as of economic flexibility, opportunism (in the best sense), and family solidarity. Not coincidentally, the Italian divorce and illegitimacy rates are a sixth of the British—a product not only of Italy's Catholicism.

In Britain, by contrast, the financial probity of the public administration, a legacy of the Victorian era (in which the state hardly impinged on the lives of individuals at all) misled people into a fatal misapprehension. They supposed that, because no public official ever asked for or expected a bribe, or could be easily swayed by other forms of illicit influence, public officials actually worked both for the public good and the good of individuals. People therefore came to believe in the beneficence, or at least the benevolent neutrality, of the state. Its officials were honest and fair, and therefore it was good.

I see the deleterious consequences of this mistaken belief in many of my patients. They often devote their lives to trying to extract what they believe is their due from the authorities, whose failure to provide it is to them inexplicable, since no one appears personally to benefit



. . . contrasts with Tony Blair's statism.

from it. If only someone in the administration would say to them, "Give me £100 and I'll do it," all would make sense to them: but no one ever does. The illusion thus persists, sometimes for years, that the authorities are genuinely looking into it. The British national pastime is Waiting for Godot.

My patients who live in public housing, for example, inhabit a world of endless, inexplicable official delay and prevarication. The rhetoric of politicians and the financial integrity of the housing department have convinced them that public housing exists for the benefit of those who live in it, so they suffer from paralyzing cognitive dissonance when problems arise. I see this often. When a damp patch appeared on the living-room wall of one of my patients and then spread throughout his apartment to such an extent that the electricity blew out and he and his family had to live in the only room not yet affected, he found the authorities distinctly—and mysteriously—unhelpful. For 18 months, he sought their assistance, but they lost his letters, denied they had ever received them, sent an inspector who said there was no damp present despite the fact that black mold was attacking everything in the affected rooms, sent a contractor who simply covered the damp walls with cardboard that the mold soon ate away, and finally accused the tenant himself of being responsible for the damp because he had overheated the rooms with the windows shut. Therefore, they declared, they could do nothing further to help him. Because it had not occurred to him that there might be other forms of dishonesty than financial, my patient persisted in his search for satisfaction for a long time, believing himself to be the isolated victim of bad luck rather than of systematic neglect.

When finally he realized that bad luck alone could not explain his experience, his willing and patient dependence gave way to angry resentment: but neither dependence nor resentment is constructive. A large and honest, but indifferent or incompetent, state bureaucracy creates expectations that give rise to this dialectic of dependence and resentment, which does not exist in Italy, where no one would assume the honesty and therefore the benevolence of the public administration in the first place.

The vast and seemingly benevolent state has completely eroded the proud and sturdy independence of the British population, once remarked upon by visitors. Forty percent of Britons now depend on government subsidy, receiving direct payment from the public purse as part, or all, of their income. Even so, the government regularly mounts advertising campaigns to ensure that people claim all their entitlements. Moreover, the British state has removed several important areas of human life from the responsibility of individuals to arrange for themselves or their families: health, education, social security, pensions, and (for at least a quarter of the population) housing. The income left to them after taxation—or received from the government dole—is thus a kind of pocket money, the more serious, if more vexatious and boring, aspects of a personal budget having been already taken care of by the government. This explains why, whenever the British government considers a tax cut, almost all newspapers, no matter of what political tendency, describe the measure as giving money away—indulging in a handout, like a parent doling out a weekly allowance to children.

The entrapment of people in the psychologically and economically debilitating dialectic I have described is not a marginal, but a mass, phenomenon. It addles the brain and paralyzes action. It helps to explain the degradation and lack of self-respect that is so obvious in the streets of Britain but so absent from those of Italy.

When I worked in East Africa, I saw an instructive contrast between an Italian and a British construction project within a few miles of each other. The British construction workers were drunken, violent, debauched, and dirty, without shame or dignity. Utterly egotistical, yet without much individuality, they wrecked hugely expensive machinery when drunk, without a moment's regret, and responded with outrage if reprimanded. They intimidated their managers, who made little attempt to control them. They were truly representative of a population that has lost any pride in itself or in what it does, and that somehow contrives to be frivolous without gaiety.

By contrast, the Italians were hardworking, disciplined, and clean, and could enjoy themselves in a civilized way even in the African bush, drinking without drunkenness or that complete loss of self-control characteristic of today's British. Unlike the British, they never became a nuisance to the local population, and everyone saw them as people who had come to do a job of work. At once more social and more self-reliant than their British counterparts, they were men whose dignity had not been destroyed by a culture of dependence.

Italy's public administration vastly surpasses Britain's in only one area: the preservation of the country's urban heritage. This single bureaucratic success is crucial, however, for it greatly elevates Italy's standard of living over Britain's. The destruction of Britain's urban patrimony and its replacement by hideous modernist multi-story parking garages and office buildings, while inflating the GNP, represent a lowering of every Briton's quality of life.

You would think that Britain, with a less rich architectural heritage to preserve than Italy, would preserve what it had all the more zealously. But no: Britain's townscape, once civilized and gracious, has fallen prey to an ideological pincer movement. At one end of the political spectrum, the rawest and shortest-sighted commercial interests demanded and won freedom to do whatever they wished with the inherited townscape, in the cheapest and most profitable way, so that harmonious assemblages of buildings centuries old suffered the most philistine and incongruous redevelopment that ruined them beyond hope of restoration. At the other end of the spectrum, radical reformers fanatically hated the architectural symbols of the past, merely because they *were* symbols of the past, whose despised elitist culture supposedly rested solely on exploitation, racism, slavery, and so forth.

The official architect and town planner of the city in which I live, for example, wanted—quite literally—to pull down every single local building that dated from before the second half of the twentieth century, including entire Georgian streets and many masterpieces of the Victorian gothic revival. Fortunately, he retired when perhaps a tenth of the old buildings still remained: the rest having by then been replaced by Le Corbusian leviathans so horrible and inhuman that many of them are now scheduled for demolition in their turn, less than 30 years after their erection. The Georgian spa city of Bath offers an even more startling example: in the 1950s, the city council wanted to raze it to the ground and replace it with something more in tune with the times.

Such barbarous thoughts would never have occurred to any Italian, however corrupt or politically extreme he might otherwise have been. As Giorgio Bassani observes of the street of palaces where his protagonists live in *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*: "[The] Corso Ercole I d'Este is so fine, and such a tourist attraction, that the left-wing council that has been running Ferrara for nearly fifteen years has realized it must be left as it is and strictly protected against speculative builders and shopkeepers; in fact, that its aristocratic character must be preserved exactly as it was." Never in England.

Actually, Italian municipal policy has been even more enlightened than this passage suggests. Commercial enterprises in old towns and cities must conform to aesthetic standards, so as not to do violence to the appearance of buildings, with the result that the Italians are not, like the British, modern barbarians camped out in the relics of an older and superior civilization to whose beauties they are oblivious. Italian municipalities have also kept their cities vibrant by capping the local taxes of small businesses, thus nurturing a variety of shops that in turn nourish many crafts, from papermaking to glass-blowing, that might otherwise have died. Thus, an uneducated man in Italy can still be a proud craftsman, while in Britain he must take a low-paid, unskilled job—if he takes a job at all. Italian downtowns are not as British city centers are, the location of depressingly uniform chain stores without character or individuality, plate-glassed emporia hacked into the ground floors of historic buildings without regard to the original architecture. The Italians have solved, as the British have not, the problem of living in a modern way in ancient surroundings that, looked at in economic terms, constitute inherited wealth.

The preservation of the aesthetic quality of Italian life, but its utter destruction in Britain, whose streets have been coarsened to a degree unequaled in Europe, has had profound social and economic consequences. Where all is ugliness and indifference to aesthetic considerations, it is easy for behavior to become ugly and crude and for collective municipal pride to evaporate. It seems not to matter how people conduct themselves: there is nothing to spoil. Attention to detail, important in both the manufacture of goods and the provision of services, attenuates in an environment of generalized ugliness. What is the point of wiping a table, if the world around it is irredeemably hideous? To be sure, self-respect can encourage people to make the best of a bad job, but dependency on the state has destroyed the basis of self-respect.

In a world grown richer, aesthetic quality has obvious economic benefits. Given the gulf between the excellence of Italian design, educated by the beauties of the past, and the unremitting tastelessness of British modernity, it is not a coincidence that Italy has one of the largest trading surpluses of any nation, while Britain has one of the largest deficits.

Italy has long cherished a certain Anglophilia, or at least an admiration for the supposed uprightness of British life, which Italians considered a model worthy of imitation. This uprightness, Italians believed, characterized the conduct both of the government and of the population, which was too proud and self-reliant to stoop to dishonesty. Alas, this is a vision of the past, not of the present.

In any case, the Italians know themselves well enough not to believe wholeheartedly in the possibility of honest government in their country: which is why the allegations of dishonesty hurled against Prime Minister Berlusconi before his election were beside the point. Even if such accusations were true, the new prime minister would only have done on a grand scale what most Italians have done on a small one. The electorate probably appreciated that a leviathan state is harmful because it is leviathan, not because it is corrupt. An uncorrupt leviathan state is, in fact, more to be feared than a corrupt one. Indeed, if the Italian state were to turn honest without a simultaneous reduction in its size, the result would be an economic and cultural catastrophe for Italy.

The British, by contrast, are still attached to their state as calves to the udder. They have just voted massively for a party and a man who claim to be responsible for everything—whose government has recently issued, for example, an official booklet to every engaged couple outlining the advantages and disadvantages of marriage, as if the population were incapable of thinking for itself even about those things that most intimately concern it (which, under a regime like this, is increasingly the case).

What can be the future of a country whose government believes that the population needs to be told that marriage can sometimes result in marital disharmony?

Letters

Criminal—Not Racial—Profiling

To the editor:

Three years ago, I was involved in the now infamous New Jersey Turnpike tragedy that initiated the furor over "racial profiling."

I would like to thank Heather Mac Donald for being the second person—the first being Judge Andrew J. Smithson, who dismissed criminal charges in our case—to see past the explosive political controversy over alleged racial profiling, and tell the truth. Her story was clear, concise, and extremely accurate as to the numerous factors that lead an officer to conduct a vehicle search.

Trooper John I. Hogan
New Jersey State Police

To the editor:

I have read Heather Mac Donald's articles on policing and am extremely impressed with her research, her insight, and most of all, her courage.

"The Myth of Racial Profiling" describes police departments that, like my own, receive requests from everyday citizens for aid in cleaning up their neighborhoods. But how can police help if laws are passed to prosecute them for doing their jobs?

The Texas State Legislature is currently trying to pass a racial-profiling bill similar to the one that New Jersey now has in place. It's sad that people in powerful positions can create laws and policies that will adversely affect the lives of so many good citizens, of people begging for police assistance.

BROWN BROTHERS

I know officers who no longer put their hearts into crime suppression because they fear reprisal. I have heard, "Well, it looks like they want to give the streets back to the criminals. They'll figure out their mistake in a year or so, and we'll have to come clean up the mess." The problem with this attitude is that cops will take a step backward in the effort to create a sense of our being part of the community. Then it won't just be the thoughtless lawmakers letting down good people in bad areas.

Sergeant Chris Nafe
President, Abilene (TX)
Police Officers' Association

To the editor:

I had to re-read "The Myth of Racial Profiling" because the facts and analysis were so thorough and compelling. I have not found an equally compelling argument on the other side of the profiling issue.

The most disturbing point is the irony of the developing political situation. If anti-profiling crusaders achieve their goals, minority neighborhoods with many law-abiding, decent people will again succumb to crime. Reduced police presence will ultimately harm precisely those people the crusade was supposed to help and who are most in need of heightened anti-crime measures. What will the anti-profilers say then—that there is no concern for the safety of minority neighborhoods?

Lena Robinson
Winthrop, MA

Civil Incivility?

To the editor:

I could not agree more with the basic premise of Brian C. Anderson's "Illiberal Liberalism"

Letters

[Spring 2001]. Civility *has* disappeared in most arenas of political and social debate, and the deceitful invective of Paul Begala and James Carville may constitute the real "Clinton legacy": that character assassination for political gain—as long as it's legal—is acceptable.

While the left's extreme rhetoric on affirmative action, race relations, and abortion has no place in the realm of reasoned political debate, extreme positions from the other side of the aisle that are presented under the guise of civil discussion shouldn't be excused, either. Anderson seems to apply his standard of civility inconsistently. If Procter & Gamble and American Express stop sponsoring Dr. Laura, it needn't be interpreted as a sign that "traditional sexual mores are now taboo." Those firms may have withdrawn their ads for strictly economic reasons, so as not to offend a large segment of their customers. Or perhaps they thought that Dr. Laura's views hinder understanding of a controversial issue, and might reinforce certain extremists' view that "gay bashing" is acceptable.

Not all homosexuals want their sex lives publicly "celebrated." Most just want to be safe in their jobs and on the streets. To say that we should show homosexuals "respect and kindness" while describing their behavior as "deviant" does not promote an atmosphere of security for gays. Didn't Matthew Shepard's murderers think he was morally inferior, and that killing him was not quite like killing a straight man?

Symposiums that discuss whether homosexuality is not genetically caused are comparable to discussion panels on the "creationist" origins of the universe: one has the right to hold these views, but they are equally absurd.

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Letters

Everyone is entitled to his opinion. But if the opinions of Khallid Muhammad "have no place in the democratic public square," why welcome opinions equally offensive to segments of the population simply because they are presented less vehemently? I think you should rethink your views.

C. H. Browne
New York, NY

Brian C. Anderson responds:

C. H. Browne's thoughtful letter, which otherwise endorses my analysis of "illiberal liberalism," suggests that conservatives who raise moral objections to homosexual acts—even with apparent civility—are really bigots comparable to left-wing haters like Khallid Muhammad, and thus should have no place in legitimate public debate.

But Browne unwittingly exhibits the very illiberalism my article warns against, peremptorily deciding what is at stake regarding the public moral status of homosexuality. The conservative view grows out of more than 2,000 years of Western moral thinking. But no matter: if gays find that tradition "offensive"—Browne's sole criterion for detecting the presence of bigotry—out it goes. Pretty soon, the Bible and Dante's *Divine Comedy* (or, for that matter, the Boy Scouts, Dr. Laura Schlessinger, and much else besides) become taboo. This is not how our democracy should engage its deepest moral differences.

I agree that "not all homosexuals" want their life-styles publicly celebrated; my argument was directed at militant gay activists who shout down opposing views and try to force their beliefs on others.

Why does Browne describe those who see homosexuality as possibly non-genetic in origin—and perhaps open to therapeutic treatment—as loons? At present, the origins of homosexuality remain a mystery; scientists have discovered no "gay gene."

For a true liberal, the question of what causes homosexuality would remain an open one.

The voice of freedom never faltered, even though it stuttered.

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The People's Republic of Gotham

To the editor:

Steven Malanga's article on the GOP ["New York's Republican Crack-Up," Spring 2001] is superb. The Republican leadership's lurch to the left suggests a party that campaigns in one direction and governs in another. It is instructive that, as much of the world moves toward the privatization of public assets, New York State recently underwrote a $7 billion bond to make the Long Island Lighting Company—a private company—into a public utility. If there were truth in political advertising, the New York State Republican Party would be relabeled the Democratic Party and the Democrats in turn would be called the Socialist Party. Unfortunately, truth and politics aren't compatible.

Herbert London
New York University

To the editor:

What an irony that a liberal is obliged to suggest an error in Steven Malanga's "New York's Republican Crack-Up." He asserts that Jack Kemp was the first New Yorker on a national Republican ticket since 1948. What about William Miller, the 1964 running mate of Barry Goldwater?

Richard Aspinwall
New York, NY

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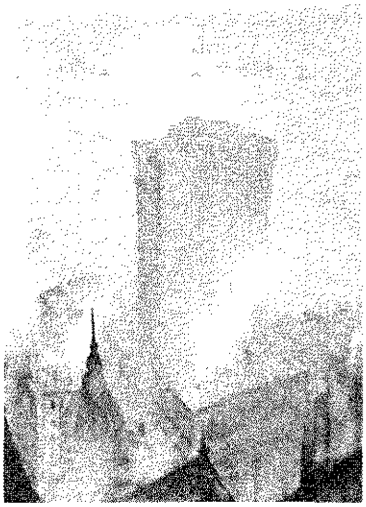
Kay S. Hymowitz, a contributing editor of *City Journal,* is the author of *Ready or Not: Why Treating Children as Small Adults Endangers Their Future and Ours.* She has written for the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times.*

Heather Mac Donald is a contributing editor of *City Journal,* John M. Olin Fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and author of *The Burden of Bad Ideas: How Modern Intellectuals Misshape Our Society.* Her articles have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal, The New Republic,* and the *New York Times.*



The Statue of Liberty from the Railroad Club, c. 1919 (oil on canvas)
Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson/Phillips,
The International Fine Art auctioneers/The Bridgeman Art Library International Ltd.

Steven Malanga is a contributing editor of *City Journal* and a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. He was formerly executive editor at *Crain's New York Business.*

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Gumshoe Diarist

Nailing Scammers

Steven Malanga

It's a weekday morning, and Mike Russell is out cruising the crowded streets of Brooklyn. An NYPD detective for 16 years, Russell once tracked down Jamaican drug dealers and pursued cop killers on these same streets. "It was an adrenaline rush being on the job," says the ex-Marine. "One minute you were sitting peacefully in a squad car, the next you were chasing some guy across the street," he tells me. Today, Russell works as a private investigator for the Geico insurance firm. He's on the trail of insurance fraud, and neighborhoods like Sheepshead Bay and Brighton Beach are good places to hunt for it. Street gangs have been staging accidents throughout Brooklyn, then sending "victims" for "treatment" to the phony clinics that have sprung up like weeds in the area.

Russell wants the scammers to know that this is *his* turf. When he sees a particularly suspicious new clinic—one, say, with no doctor's name or office hours listed on the door—he'll park his car and saunter inside, sending clerks and receptionists scrambling. "Once, I walked in, and there was a whole bunch of people in the lobby filling out police accident reports. You thought you were in a precinct," he recalls.

For Russell, who did a stint as a beat cop before becoming a detective, chasing down these schemes isn't glamorous—not the stuff of *NYPD Blue* or even *Double Indemnity*, the classic film noir starring Edward G. Robinson as an insurance investigator. But he and his colleagues are doing yeoman's work nonetheless: insurance scams uncovered by New York's industry gumshoes have tripled since 1995, to 12,372 last year.

Insurance fraud is epidemic in New York because of weak penalties and gaping loopholes in the state's no-fault insurance laws. The rackets have produced heavy losses for insurers, totaling in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and big premiums for New Yorkers.

Private investigators say the range of rip-offs is extraordinary, needing all of their street smarts to figure out. One day, Russell might find himself investigating gangs who use stolen identities to file false claims; the next, he's sifting through county records to debunk fraudulent claims based on forged marriage licenses, or making surprise visits to victims purportedly disabled in minor auto accidents. "Some of them act surprised to see me," he says. "They don't think anyone cares enough to look into their cases."

In one imaginative scam, a victim, unemployed for years, filed for lost wages, claiming that he was just about to start a job when he got into a car crash. Suspicious, Russell showed up at the firm that supposedly hired the victim and asked to see his job application, résumé, and other files. There were none. "Turned out the guy who owned the business was the victim's brother-in-law, trying to do him a favor by helping him file a false claim," says Russell. "He said to me, 'You really came all the way down here just to check this out?' "

In another recent case, a passenger claimed that he developed post-traumatic stress syndrome as a result of a minor accident, so driving was now impossible for him. He sought a heavy settlement until Russell got on his case. The investigator pulled the guy's motor-vehicle records and found that police had hit him with several speeding tickets—after he supposedly stopped driving. "I went to him and said, 'So, how come you got these tickets?' He told me he still used his car in emergencies," says Russell, eyebrows arching skeptically.

Insurance fraud is often more than just a crime against companies, Russell stresses. Increasingly, investigators find themselves battling gangs that steal the identity of a policyholder and then file false claims under his name. Russell labored for a year and a half to clear a client whose driving record contained a raft of accidents others had actually staged. Finally, he tracked down a trucker who had taken a picture of the driver of the car that hit him, a black woman. Russell's client, the real policyholder, was white.

Russell is now working to clear the name of a bus driver with multiple crashes to his name—all caused by someone else. The man has been unemployed for a year because of the blemishes on his record. "The poor guy's wife wants to divorce him," says Russell. "I tell her, it's not his fault. He really didn't cause these accidents. Sooner or later, we'll prove it."

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